CHURCH HEALTH AND REVIVAL:

AN ANALYSIS FOR CHURCH LEADERSHIP

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DEDICATION

To Katrina, my beautiful wife, who has partnered with me in home and ministry for thirty five years, encouraging me in the pursuit of God's full plan for His church.

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ABSTRACT

Church health is the application of the metaphor of medicine to the local church, the body of Christ, in order to promote internal conditions that will enable it to fulfill the plan for which God has designed it. Its roots are in the church growth movement, but with an emphasis on qualities over numbers. The various systems of church health rely on an empirical study of today's churches and an exegetical study of the New Testament scriptures. Omitted is the amazing story of church history, and how God has been working in the church for nineteen hundred years. Specifically, we have much to learn from the powerful movements of the Holy Spirit that we call revival and awakening.

This project analyzes the systems of the prominent leaders in the church health movement with the principles of church health discernable in revival history. After defining church health, the author identifies a revival model with seven principles from history. These are then compared with the Sonlife/Growing a Healthy Church model of Dann Spader, the Purpose-driven model of Rick Warren, the Natural Church Development model of Christian Schwarz, and the Becoming a Healthy Church model of Stephen Macchia. The conclusion points out seven areas of consensus, and looks at the unique contributions of church health and revival to the renewal of the local church.

Other authors on church health are given in the first appendix. Other appendices examine concerns regarding Rick Warren on repentance and Christian Schwarz's theology. The last is the application to the author's setting in a district

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS CHURCH HEALTH?

Addressing a Need

Casual estimates continue to be made that anywhere from two thirds to eighty-

five percent of America's churches are either plateaued or declining.[1] While the research

behind these estimates is difficult to track down,[2] few are contesting such claims. Within

the evangelical church, once flourishing denominations struggle as they close nearly as

many churches as they open.[3] Pastors are frustrated as they try to be faithful in doing

what they have done in the past, but now with far less success. Church leaders are

disillusioned, as they cannot understand why their congregations are getting smaller

while the huge churches down the road grow even bigger.

Not long ago, concerned pastors and denominational leaders would have turned to

church growth experts for help—but the church growth movement has waned, if not died.

In its place has come a new approach: church health.

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[1] Haddon Robinson uses the 85 percent figure. Timothy Morgan, with reports from Thomas S. Giles, "COVER: Re-engineering the Seminary: Crisis of Credibility Forces Change," *Christianity Today* (October 24, 1994), 75. See also: Eric Swanson, "Great to Good Churches," Leadership Journal (Spring 2003); 37-38; John C. LaRue, Jr. "Three Church Growth Myths," Leadership Journal.net (February 21, 2001); available from http://www.christianitytoday.com/leaders/newsletter/2001/cln10221.html; Internet; accessed August 1, 2006.

[2] The original study might have been done by the Princeton Religion Research Center in conjunction with Gallup International, and published in *Emerging Trends* in 1999.

[3] This has been the case in the last few years for several districts of the Christian & Missionary Alliance, the denomination in which this author has pastored for thirty years. The C&MA in the United States is a pro-active denomination with a history of growing churches.

Church health is the application of the metaphor of medicine to the local church, the body of Christ, in order to promote internal conditions that will enable it to fulfill the plan for which God has designed it. Rick Warren predicted, "I believe the key issue for churches in the twenty-first century will be church health, not church growth. Focusing on growth alone misses the point. When congregations are healthy, they grow the way God intends."[4]

There is no spokes-person at the center of this movement. There is no organizational structure that brings a united front. Rather, there are several individuals who, through their writings and ministries, have risen to leadership within evangelicalism and beyond. Who in America has not heard of Rick Warren, senior pastor of Saddleback Church? Journalists refer to him as "America's most influential spiritual leader" and "America's Pastor," and Time Magazine recently named him among the 100 most influential people in the world.[5] Most do not know that over three hundred thousand pastors in twenty-two different languages have been trained in the purpose-driven church paradigm.[6] His web site claims that there are purpose-driven congregations in every nation of the world. Less spectacular, but just as influential in the realm of church health, is Christian Schwarz, who notes that 40,000 churches in nearly 70 countries have used the assessment tool of Natural Church Development. He claims that those churches that have followed through with the principles of NCD and repeated the survey have

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[4] Rick Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 49.

[5] USA Today, Wall Street Journal, TIME, New Yorker, Boston Globe, Washington Post, New York Times, U.S. News and World Report, The Nation, as footnoted in the article "Rick Warren" *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*; available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rick_Warren#endnote_AmericasPastor; Internet; accessed August 1, 2006.
Steptoe, Sonja, "Time 100: Scientists and Thinkers: A Pastor with a Purpose," *Time Magazine* 18 April 2005; 108.

[6] "Welcome to Purpose-Driven Ministries;" available from http://www.purposedriven.com/en-US/International/Home.html; Internet; accessed August 1, 2006.

experienced 51% growth between the first and third round. There are also leaders like Stephen Macchia, who has addressed the need for church renewal through Vision New England and is finding a following across America, and Thom Rainer, who has done the same within and beyond the Southern Baptists.

Church health is becoming the answer to churches around the world that seek to know and fulfill their mission—whether they are in a state of decline, plateau, or growth.

<center>Defining Church Health</center>

The term "church health" has grown to signify far more than the sum of its two monosyllables, yet for our purposes it is worthwhile to begin in a dictionary. The word *health* can be traced etymologically to Old English, with its present primary definition being: "the condition of being sound in body, mind, or spirit; especially: freedom from physical disease or pain."[7] The word is often extended to the general condition of a living body, as in "good health" or "poor health," and further to inanimate objects or concepts, such as "a healthy economy" or "an unhealthy outlook on life."

The "church" of church health is the local body of believers, in contrast to the universal church, denominations, or regional groupings of churches.

The focus of church health is on the essential systems, characteristics or qualities of the local church, with the expectation that as their condition improves the church will experience the fruitfulness that God intended.

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[7] "Health." *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 1989), 558.

Roots in the Church Growth Movement

As best as this author can determine, the concept of health in the local church was
first popularized within the writings of the church growth movement.[8] In 1976, C. Peter
Wagner, Associate Professor of the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological
Seminary, published the book, *Your Church Can Grow*.[9] It carried the sub-title, "Seven
Vital Signs of a Healthy Church." The premise was that where these seven vital signs are
present, you can expect that church to grow.

A few years later, Wagner published *Your Church Can Be Healthy*,[10] which was
later revised and published as *The Healthy Church*.[11] From a negative tact, he warned
the church of nine growth-inhibiting diseases, using terms that sound much like a medical
diagnosis, such as ethnikitis, people-blindness, and hypopneumia. Early, he
distinguished between faithfulness and health:

> As we all know, however, some churches that are faithful to God do not seem to
> grow. They confess Jesus as Lord. They believe in sound doctrine. They pray
> with fervor. They study the Bible and conscientiously seek to obey its precepts.
> They raise funds for foreign missions. They serve their fellow human beings.
> They celebrate the Lord's Supper regularly. Somehow, though, their faithfulness to
> God, of and by itself, does not seem to be attractive enough to outsiders to draw
> them into the church. With a few exceptions, the church consists of virtually the
> same group of people as it was 5 or 10 years ago.[12]

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[8] The church growth movement began with Donald McGavran, who as a missionary to India
discerned principles in working with churches that he began to publish in 1936. His books, *The Bridges of
God* (Friendship Press, 1955) and *How Churches Grow* (Friendship Press, 1959) were influential in the
formation of the Institute of Church Growth, which soon became centered at the School of World Mission
at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. Related ministries began to flourish, under the
leadership of men like Win C. Arn, Paul Benjamin, Dennis Oliver, Virgil Gerber and Elmer Towns. C.
Peter Wagner, the successor to McGavran, became the chief spokesperson for church growth in America.
In the late 1980s, Wagner shifted his focus to the spiritual issues of church growth, particularly signs and
wonders as the means of power evangelism. Theological objections soon led to the decline of the
movement at Fuller. For a more thorough work on church growth, read Thom S. Rainer, *The Book of
Church Growth: History, Theology, and Principles* (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1993).

[9] C. Peter Wagner, *Your Church Can Grow: Seven Vival Signs of a Healthy Church* (Glendale,
California: Regal Books, 1976).

[10] C. Peter Wagner, *Your Church Can Be Healthy* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon, 1979).

[11] C. Peter Wagner, *The Healthy Church* (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1996).

[12] *Ibid.*, 10.

Other evangelical authors of that time began to use the terminology of health in reference to the local church, as well.[13] Within two decades, the church growth movement was superseded by proponents of church health. Men like Rick Warren and Christian Schwarz, who were trained at Fuller Seminary in the School of World Mission under Peter Wagner and his church growth colleagues, have chosen to speak in terms of health rather than growth. Warren's journey is quite informative:

> I have a problem with numerical growth being the primary focus of pastors. In the early 1980s, I used the term "church growth" because that was what everybody was familiar with. But I stopped using the phrase around 1986 because of the things I didn't like about the church growth movement.
>
> For one thing, I don't like the incessant comparing of churches. The Bible says it's foolish to compare yourself to others. If you find somebody who's doing a better job than you, you get discouraged. If you find you're doing a better job than someone else, you could become proud. Either way, you're dead in the water.
>
> A far better focal point than growth is health. Size is not the issue. You can be big and healthy, or big and flabby. You can be small and healthy, or small and wimpy. Big isn't better: small isn't better. Healthy is better. So I'm interested in helping churches become balanced and healthy.
>
> If a church is healthy, growth is a natural occurrence. I don't have to command my kids to grow. If I provide them with a healthy environment, growth is automatic. If growth is not happening, it means something's wrong because it's the nature of living organisms to grow. Church growth automatically means numerical growth to most people, but that's only one kind of growth God is looking for in his church….
>
> Actually, numerical growth is not an unreliable indicator of church health; it is merely inadequate. There are five ways to measure growth….[14]

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[13] See: Charles Chaney and Ron Lewis, *Design for Church Growth* (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman, 1978); Jerry Cook and Stanley Baldwin, *Love, Acceptance, and Forgiveness* (Glendale, California: Regal, 1979).

[14] Rick Warren, "Making Ministry Healthy" *Growing Your Church Through Training and Motivation,* Library of Leadership Development, ed. Harold Shelley (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany House Publishers, 1997), 10.

The criticism that the church growth movement over-emphasized numerical growth is quite common among church health proponents. Other criticisms include its fascination with the success of large churches, its pre-occupation with analysis, and its emphasis on methodology over Holy Spirit empowerment.[15] To be fair, one might see the church health movement[16] as a self-correction emerging from within the church growth movement. It could be a point of evolution to a higher form. Even so, the similarities between church growth and church health are many.

<div align="center">Issue of Methodology</div>

One of those similarities is methodology. Church growth principles, from the studies of Donald McGavran through the work of Peter Wagner, Win Arn, Elmer Towns and Thom Rainer, are largely based on scientific research. The scientific method within sociology has been applied to the study of numerous churches. Principles have been extracted that have proven true in field testing. When applied to a local church they are expected to promote an environment for growth.

Similarly, with many of the church health proponents, hundreds or thousands of churches have been studied to determine the conditions that make for a healthy church. Christian Schwarz is the most notable advocate of this approach, having studied a thousand churches from which he developed an assessment tool used in churches around the world. These surveys fortify the initial results. He finds a divine invitation in

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[15] Warren, "Comprehensive Health Plan", Leadership Journal, XVIII (Summer 1997), 23.

[16] Church health movement is this author's terminology. While there are constant references to the church growth movement, there were none to be found for a church health movement.

Matthew 6:28, "See the lilies of the field, how they grow,"[17] to diligently study the

growth mechanisms that govern the kingdom of God.[18] He writes,

> I have discovered the principles of natural church development from three different sources:
>
> 1. Through our empirical research of growing and non-growing churches. This does not mean, however, that we blindly accept the explanations churches give for their own growth or lack of growth.
>
> 2. By observing nature, that is God's creation. As we saw before, the Bible itself exhorts us to use this approach.
>
> 3. By studying Scripture. Throughout the Bible we consistently encounter the biotic principles of church development—though not with these technical terms.
>
> Neither the observation of churches or of nature should ever become the basis for establishing absolute standards. If a concept contradicts biblical truth, Christians should reject it, even if it appears to have been used with "success". . . . Our task is to carefully and biblically discern what is theologically legitimate and what is not.[19]

Other church health authors that this writer will study approach this matter from a

different direction. Dann Spader, author of *Growing a Healthy Church*, derived his

principles from a study of a harmony of the Gospels, looking at the methodologies of

Jesus Himself. Rick Warren found his five purposes for the church from an exegesis of

the Great Commandment and Great Commission given by Jesus to the disciples.[20] Any

effort by either of them to study today's churches seems only to illustrate the biblical

directives.

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[17] All Bible quotations are from the *The Holy Bible: New International Version* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1984 by International Bible Society).

[18] Christian A. Schwarz, *Natural Church Development* (Carol Stream, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1996), 10.

[19] *Ibid.*, 13.

[20] Matt. 22:37-40 & 28:19-20.

Skipping over Church History

Whether the principles of church health are derived by empirical research of today's churches, or by exegetical study of New Testament passages, one significant factor has been omitted: the ways that God has worked in church history.[21] It is a long jump from the first century church to the church of today. God has been working in powerful ways in the church over the nineteen hundred years since the last book of the Bible was written. Though no new revelation has been added, we must acknowledge that God has opened the understanding of the church to revealed truths of theology, such as the Trinity, the nature of Christ, the extent of the canon, and salvation by faith. The church has experienced persecutions, reformations, renewals, awakenings, and revivals. Is there anything to be learned from these experiences in church history that would inform us of the conditions necessary for God to bless the local church today? What were the health conditions of the churches of the past as they began to experience powerful movements of the Holy Spirit that they called revival? What happened in the last few centuries that caused the rapid growth of the church, and prompted the world missions movement? There is an ample amount of recorded history available to us to find answers.

Searching for a Consensus

The intent of this project is to compare the systems of the prominent leaders in the church health movement with the principles of church health discernable in revival

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[21] For an interesting treatment on lessons from church history see: Mark Shaw, *10 Great Ideas from Church History* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1997). The sixth chapter is devoted to the revival theology of Jonathan Edwards.

history. The analysis is intended to stimulate pastors and church leaders to consider other

factors that any one church health system might omit.

The next chapter will attempt to identify those principles in revival history,

looking at significant persons in the Great Awakenings. From writings on this subject,

we will identify a revival model.

In chapter three, we will examine the work of Dann Spader, one of the earlier

church health figures. The source of his principles is a study of the life of Jesus in the

gospels. Though not controversial, he brings valuable insights to a philosophy of church

health.

Chapter four will focus on the purpose-driven approach of Rick Warren. Though

his is also derived from Scripture, his unique experience as the pastor of Saddleback

Community Church, one of the largest churches in America, appears to underscore his

findings.

Christian Schwarz and Natural Church Development will be the subject of chapter

five. He comes as a social scientist with eight qualities of a healthy church discovered

through thorough research.

The final church health figure to discuss will be Stephen Macchia, in chapter six,

who uses both the methodologies of exegesis and research while having an appreciation

of revival history.

There are several other authors and consultants on the church health scene who,

for various reasons, have been left out of the body of this paper. They are identified in

Appendix 1.

In each chapter, an expanding table will be provided for comparison. It is difficult to determine where authors agree or disagree, so there may be a significant margin of error in comparing their positions.

The conclusion of this project, in chapter seven, will note the points of consensus between the different models, as well as the points of departure. What is the significance where there is consensus, and what should we conclude where there is not? Is there something that revival addresses that has been neglected by church health? Are there principles that church health offers that go beyond the revival model? These, and other questions, will be answered as an objective analysis is attempted.

The purpose of this paper is to provide an introduction to pastors and church leaders to the field of church health and revival, so that they may be given sufficient insights to be able to discern how to lead their own churches into God's place of health and blessing.

CHAPTER 2

CHURCH HEALTH THROUGH REVIVAL:

THE GREAT AWAKENINGS IN AMERICA

American Revival History

In the years 1734 and 1735, Jonathan Edwards witnessed what he called "the surprising work of God" in the town of Northampton, Massachusetts, as more than three hundred people of all ages gave personal testimony of having been "savingly wrought upon" within a period of six months. According to Edwards, "The town seemed to be full of the presence of God; it never was so full of love, nor so full of joy . . . as it was then. There were remarkable tokens of God's presence in almost every house."[1] Thirty-two other communities in the surrounding area were similarly affected. Such was the beginning of the First Great Awakening, a unique movement of God in the American colonies, and parts of Europe, that peaked in the years 1740-42 under the preaching of men like George Whitefield, Gilbert Tennant, and of course, Jonathan Edwards.

The beginning of the evangelical movement in America has been traced back to this period, with its emphases on immediate conversion through the new birth and a personal relationship with God. All Protestant denominations would be affected, and new movements would be birthed under leaders like John Wesley, Gilbert Tennant, and Charles Finney, all who treasured the writings of Jonathan Edwards.

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[1] Jonathan Edwards, *A Faithful Narrative*. Quoted in C. G. Goen, "Editor's Introduction," In *Jonathan Edwards: The Great Awakening* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 21.

It was in the midst of this awakening, which had many detractors, that Edwards was encouraged to write a defense of the "revival of religion" they were undergoing. His response, which was later expanded into a book, *The Distinguishing Marks*,[2] included acknowledgement of flaws of the revivals and their excesses, as well as the delineation of five indicators that the hand of God is involved:

1) It raises their esteem of Jesus as Son of God and Savior of the world,

2) It leads them to turn their corruptions and lusts to the righteousness of God,

3) It increases their regard for Holy Scripture,

4) It establishes their minds in the objective truths of revealed religion, and

5) It evokes genuine love for God and man.

To Edwards, the scope of the Great Awakening surpassed that of the health of local churches to the transformation of entire communities, one soul at a time. He believed that the world would eventually be won to Christ by continuous revivals, until the final appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.[3] Church health, if the term had been used in that day, would be defined as revival, which was seen as the optimum working of the Spirit of God in the life of each believer.[4] The focus was on the believers of the church, not its structure or program.

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[2] Jonathan Edwards, "The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God," *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Perry Miller, John E. Smith, Harry S. Stout (New Haven, Connecticut: University Press, 1957).

[3] Edwards held to a post millennial view, expecting that revival would eventually bring about the millennial reign of Christ: "'Tis not unlikely that the work of God's Spirit, that is so extraordinary and wonderful, is the dawning, or at least a prelude, to that glorious work of God, so often foretold in Scripture, which in the progress and issue of it, shall renew the world of mankind." Jonathan Edwards, "Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival of Religion," *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Perry Miller, John E. Smith, Harry S. Stout (New Haven, Connecticut: University Press, 1957), 4:533.

[4] Goen, "Editor's Introduction," 58. In a letter by a Harvard student, possibly Benjamin Brandon, dated Feb. 4, 1742, such a working of the Holy Spirit was captured:

> [It is] a mark of the true Spirit: if it excites immoral and profane persons to reformation of their lives and conversations, and to an entire change of life; to profess a sweetness and pleasure in the ways of God, they could never have found [in] the paths of sin; if it excites outward professors to a strict

Early in the next century, Charles G. Finney abruptly left his law practice after experiencing "a mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost" which "like a wave of electricity going through and through [him] . . . seemed to come in waves of liquid love." He explained to his first client the next morning, "I have a retainer from the Lord Jesus Christ to plead his cause and I cannot plead yours."[5] He began a remarkable ministry in 1824 in upstate New York, where revival broke out in a number of small villages and spread to major towns. With powerful messages and a fiery delivery, Finney was used by God to lead thousands to faith in what was the crest of the Second Great Awakening in America. He introduced "new measures" designed to win converts, which, though controversial, have been owned in various ways as a methodology to bring about revival on a continual basis.

In his *Lectures on Revival*, he gives a clear definition of what is meant by revival: "Revival is the renewal of the first love of Christians, resulting in the awakening and conversion of sinners to God."[6] He outlined the importance of revival with these principles:

1. Spiritual awakening is crucial because it is the only thing that can remove the reproach covering the church and restore Christianity to the place it should have in the estimation of the public.

2. Nothing other than revival will bring back Christian love and confidence among church members.

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examination of their hearts with regard to the power of godliness, and to a discovery of their own self-righteousness, and of the all-sufficient righteousness of Christ, and enables them to depend on that alone for pardon and life. In fine, if it actuates young and old to crowd around the banner of the great Redeemer and… if it makes people careful to evidence their faith in the eye of the world by a life of holy obedience, and the fruits of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; and if this has appeared in multitudes a year or two ago, so as to evidence it not to be a sudden motion of the animal spirits, or a work barely on the passions, there is a great and glorious work of the Spirit of God among us.

[5] Michael S. Horton, "The Legacy of Charles Finney," *Premise* II (27 March 1995), 6.

[6] Charles G. Finney, *Lectures on Revival* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House), 15.

3. When the church is backslidden, revival is indispensable to avert God's judgment.

4. Nothing but arising to true spirituality can preserve a dying church from annihilation.

5. Nothing but revival prevents the means of grace from greatly injuring the ungodly.

6. Nothing other than spiritual awakening sanctifies a church, causing it to grow in grace and be fitted for heaven.[7]

In 1858, another moving of God began in America that, in the estimation of J. Edwin Orr, surpassed anything that had happened since the First Great Awakening. It lasted fifty years and spread around the world.[8] Beginning as a weekly prayer meeting for businessmen at their lunch hour in Brooklyn, New York, the revival grew to ten thousand men praying in New York and one million new converts in America within two years. Its primary methodology remained lay-led prayer meetings, but strong preaching played an important secondary role. Bible schools were founded to train lay workers for ministry, and missions organizations were birthed to send them abroad.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was an outstanding preacher of this time in England. In a sermon titled, "The Kind of Revival Wanted by the Church," he outlined four indications of a God-given revival:

1. A revival of the essential doctrines, including "the depravity of human nature, the work of the Holy Ghost, the blood of the atonement, [and] the punishment of sin,"[9] and the centrality of the Scriptures as the infallible basis of all teaching.

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[7] *Ibid*., 21-23.

[8] J. Edwin Orr, *The Second Evangelical Awakening in America* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1952), 20.

[9] Charles Haddon Spurgeon, "The Kind of Revival Wanted by the Church," *Banner of Truth* 73 (October 1969), 4.

2. A revival of personal godliness, for "we must each one live if the church is to be alive; we must live unto God if we expect to see the pleasure of the Lord prospering in our hands."[10]

3. A revival of domestic religion, where there is family worship, for "I would sooner have . . . family religion increased, than I would watch a frantic crowd parading the street with noisy music and harsh clamor."[11]

4. A revival of "vigorous, consecrated strength," with the necessity of dependence upon God above all. "When saints live unto God, sinners are converted to God."[12]

He concludes with a strong call to prayer, like that before Pentecost, and an appeal for this kind of revival: "Let it spread through all the households, and then run from church to church till the whole of Christendom shall be ablaze with heaven-descended fire!"[13]

Revival has been a part of the American church scene from early times to the present. Cotton Mather preached on the revival of personal religion in the late 1600s. An amazing work of God began on the campus of Howard Payne University in Texas in the 1990s, and spread to the community and dozens of campuses across the nation. In between, there are numerous accounts of the Spirit of God moving powerfully on individuals and churches that strike an exciting chord in the soul of most believers.[14]

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[10] *Ibid*., 6.
[11] *Ibid*., 7.
[12] *Ibid*., 9.
[13] *Ibid*., 10.
[14] Recommended reading on revival history is Malcolm McDow and Alvin L Reid, Firefall: *How God has Shaped History Through Revivals* (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1997; Wesley L. Duewel, *Revival Fire* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995).

Taking a step back, however, one can see that revival is how God has worked around the world since biblical times. Witness what God did for the people of Judah during the reigns of King Asa and King Josiah, and during the rebuilding of Jerusalem under Ezra and Nehemiah. Note the power of the Holy Spirit in the spread of Christianity in the Book of Acts, from Jerusalem to Judea, and Samaria, to the uttermost parts of the Roman World. Study early church history, especially figures like Irenaus, Patrick of Ireland, Augustine, Peter Waldo, and John Hus. Re-examine the Reformation to see how Christ was reviving His church. God continued to do mighty works in Europe that compare to the awakenings in America. And the spread of Christianity around the world has been accompanied with awakenings and revivals. Visit the church in Uganda or Argentina to hear first-hand of God's blessings.

Defining Revival

The Bible does not give us a definition of revival, though there are many accounts of God bestowing it upon his people.[15] Those who have studied the Scriptures and church history have given us some vivid descriptions. Andrew Murray wrote, "A true revival means nothing less than a revolution, casting out the spirit of worldliness and selfishness, and making God and His love triumph in the heart and life." Duncan Campbell, who experienced revival as he preached on the Isle of Lewis in the mid 1900s, called it "a community saturated with God." Robert Coleman, a missiologist of today,

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[15] For an excellent exposition of several passages on revival, see: Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Revive us Again: Your Wakeup Call for Spiritual Renewal* (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999).

identified revival as "that strange and sovereign work of God in which He visits His own

people, restoring, re-animating, and releasing them into the fullness of blessings."[16]

J. Edwin Orr, through decades of studying the revival and awakenings, wrote a

more thorough definition:

> An evangelical awakening is a movement of the Holy Spirit bringing about a revival of New Testament Christianity in the church of Christ and its related community. Such an awakening may change in a significant way an individual; or it may affect a larger group of believers; or it may move a congregation or the churches in the city or district, or the body of believers throughout a country or continent; or indeed the larger body of believers throughout the world. The outpouring of the Spirit affects the reviving of the church, the awakening of the masses, and the movement of uninstructed peoples toward the Christian faith; the revived church, by many or by few, is moved to engage in evangelism, in teaching, and in social action.[17]

The definition of Garth Rosell, church historian and professor of the class from

which this thesis emanates, seems most succinct: "Revival is a renewal of spiritual

vitality sent to the church as a gift from the sovereign and merciful God, and always

producing in the believing community a deeper love of God, a more faithful obedience to

the Word, and a more active concern for our neighbor."[18] Furthermore, "An awakening

is a general sweep of revival across traditional barriers (denominational, regional, class,

etc.)."

From these definitions, it is fair to say that a church that is experiencing revival is

healthy, or at least being renewed to spiritual health as a work of God. The outcome of

revival is the expressed life and mission of the church in the New Testament.

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[16] *An Urgent Appeal to Christian Leaders in America for Consensus and Collaboration on the Biblical Nature and Hope of Corporate Revival*, ed. The Drafting Committee on behalf of The Mission America Coalition, The National Revival Network, America's National Prayer Committee; available from http://www.urgentappeal.net; Internet, 18.

[17] *Ibid.*, 12.

[18] Garth Rosell, class notes: Revival and Reform: Renewing the Local Congregation, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Charlotte, North Carolina, January 14, 2004.

Identifying the Revival Model

There have been several efforts to list the essential factors that, when implemented, might bring about the experience of revival. Charles Finney remains a pivotal figure in this discussion, as he was one of the first to take the focus off of God's sovereignty in choosing to send a revival, and onto man's responsibility to promote the conditions where God would send a revival. He even spoke of tools and resources designed for such purposes.[19] Such emphases have brought discomfort, if not alienation, on the part of those more reformed in doctrine.

Even so, within evangelical Christianity there seems to be a consensus on how revival can be experienced in the church today. Spurgeon, in his sermon mentioned above, listed four characteristics of a God-given revival. Finney gave six indications of when a church should expect revival:

1. When the providence of God—His ordering of events—signals an awakening is at hand.

2. When the sinfulness of sinners grieves, humbles, and distresses Christians, expect revival.

3. A revival may be expected when Christians have a spirit of prayer for revival, that is, when they pray as if they want it.

4. Revival can be expected when pastors make it their goal; when their preaching and other efforts aim at converting sinners.

5. You can expect a revival of true Christianity when Christians begin to confess their sins to one another.

6. Spiritual awakening can be expected whenever Christians are willing to sacrifice to carry it on.[20]

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[19] Finney, *Lectures*, 17.
[20] *Ibid.*, 23-27.

Also worthy of mention is the work of Lewis A. Drummond. His points are described well in his chapter headings:

1. The King is dead… Long live the King… In a spiritual awakening, God reveals Himself as a Father; Therefore, "His people called by His Name" must respond.

2. Let my people go… In a spiritual awakening, God reveals himself as sovereign; Therefore, "Humble Yourself."

3. At last, a leader who leads… In a spiritual awakening, God reveals Himself as hope; Therefore, "Seek His face."

4. Where's the glow? . . . In a spiritual awakening, God reveals Himself as holy; Therefore, "Turn from your wicked ways."

5. Not me, Lord! . . . In a spiritual awakening, God reveals Himself as Grace; Therefore experience "Forgiveness of sin."

6. What's that mighty sound? . . . In a spiritual awakening, God reveals Himself as Power; Therefore, He will "Hear from heaven."

7. From "Ichabod" to Ebenezer" . . . In a spiritual awakening, God reveals Himself as love; Therefore, He will "Heal our land."

8. A wise man's wisest move . . . In a spiritual awakening, God reveals Himself as available; Therefore, pray."[21]

A recent collaborative work, important to our discussion, is *An Urgent Appeal to Christian Leaders in America for Concensus and Collaboration on the Biblical Nature and Hope of Corporate Revival*.[22] It is authored by "The Drafting Committee, on behalf of the Mission America Coalition, The National Revival Network, and America's National Prayer Committee," and its stated purpose is to build on a document signed by nearly forty denominational leaders and over one hundred other leaders. That document, "The Call," includes this paragraph:

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[21] Lewis Drummond, *Eight Keys to Biblical Revival* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany House Publishers), 1994.

[22] *An Urgent Appeal* (reference footnote 16).

We strongly urge all churches and all Christians of America to unite in seeking the face of God through prayer and fasting, persistently asking our Father to send revival to the church and spiritual awakening to our nation, so that Christ's Great Commission might be fulfilled worldwide in our generation.[23]

The desired response is outlined as perceive, prioritize, purify, pray, proclaim, prepare, and partner.[24]

Table 2-1 compares these four approaches of revival, beginning with the most recent, the Urgent Appeal. The fifth column is this author's attempt at identifying what the model of revival includes by noting the points of agreement. It will serve as the basis of comparison of the models of church health we will study in subsequent chapters.

The seven points of the Revival Model are those that the church pursues to prepare the way for revival. Whether revival actually occurs, where God hears from heaven and heals the land,[25] is God's sovereign choice. Some would argue that when the church begins to do these things, the Spirit of God is already at work in revival. The following points are not in any particular order, but represent how God has worked in the church typically before and as it experienced revival.

1. Awakened believers humbly desire God's sovereign working. It is a sad fact that believers are not always seeking God with their whole hearts. When they realize that there is so much more to which God has called them, including His very presence, they humbly confess their dependence on Him and seek His face.

2. High priority is given by leaders to revival. This is not to say that revivals must begin with pastors or church leaders. The most remarkable revival, the Prayer

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[23] *Ibid.*, 4.
[24] *Ibid.*, 34-35.
[25] 2 Chron. 7:14.

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Figure 2-1
Identifying the Revival Model by Comparison

Urgent Appeal, "Responses to the Hope"	Drummond, "Eight Keys"	Spurgeon, "The Kind of Revival"	Finney, "Expect Revival"	Revival Model
1. Percieve- God's Spirit awakens believers	2. God as sovereign . . . humble yourself		1. Providence of God signals it is at hand 2. Sinfulness of sinners grieves Christians	1. Awakened believers humbly desire God's sovereign working
2. Prioritize- give revival high priority	1. God as a Father . . . respond	4. Dependence upon God	4. Pastors make it their goal	2. High priority by leaders is given to revival
3. Purify- repentance must have precedence	4. God as holy . . . turn from your wicked ways 5. God as grace . . . experience forgiveness	2. Personal godliness	5. Christians begin to confess their sins to one another	3. Repentance, grace, and personal godliness are pursued openly
4. Pray- embrace the prayer movement	8. God as available . . . pray	Prevailing prayer as response	3. Christians have a spirit of prayer for revival	4. Persistent prayer for revival is on-going
5. Proclaim- Word-anchored, promote biblical promises		1. Essential doctrines and centrality of Scripture	(Yes- "How to Preach the Gospel")	5. The gospel and essential Bible doctrines are faithfully proclaimed
6. Prepare- a discipleship that is anticipatory	6. God as power . . . hear from heaven		(Yes- "Teaching Young Converts")	6. Believers are discipled to seek, know, and serve God
7. Partner- consensus and collaboration, leaders of local churches			(Yes- "The Necessity and Effect of Union")	7. Churches partner to bring revival to the community
Not included for lack of consensus:				
	3. God as hope . . . seek His face			
	(7. God as love . . . He will heal our land)			
		3. Domestic religion, family worship		
			6. Christians are willing to sacrifice to carry it on	

Revival of 1858, was begun by Jeremiah Lamphier, a persistent layman. However, it quickly received the active support of pastors. Without strong pastoral support, revivals have not continued.

3. Repentance, grace, and personal godliness are pursued openly. One of the first attributes of God apparent to the seeker is His holiness. Like Isaiah, the believer is soon made aware of his sinfulness.[26] Repentance is the necessary response to this awareness, which God covers with sufficient grace.

4. Persistent prayer for revival is on-going. Prayer is the language of seeking. In nearly all revivals, concerted prayer for revival preceded all else. In extended revivals, the church continued to pray.

5. The gospel and essential Bible doctrines are faithfully proclaimed. The power of the Word of God is present in the preaching and teaching. Essential doctrines—God's holiness, the centrality of Christ, justification by faith alone, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit—are reinforced in the believer.[27]

6. Believers are discipled to seek, know, and serve God. The on-going task of making disciples becomes even more important as seekers are coming to faith and believers are hungering after God and His Word.

7. Churches partner to bring revival to the community. God blesses the body of Christ when it is unified. When the local churches put their differences aside and gather together to seek God, He blesses. The impact of the revival reaches beyond the church to the community.

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[26] Isa. 6:5.
[27] John H. Armstrong, *When God Moves* (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 1988), 69-89.

This revival model is not intended to be comprehensive. Where there was not a consensus, the points were not included no matter how well one might argue their validity. There are lesser factors, as well, that have not been identified as key to experiencing revival. These might include worship and evangelism. Nor are the results of revival mentioned, such as life transformation and community social impact.

Even so, the Revival Model represents the essential activities of a church that is seeking health through a moving of the Holy Spirit akin to the days of the Great Awakenings and even the revivals recorded in Scripture.

CHAPTER 3

CHURCH HEALTH BY THE BASICS:

DANN SPADER AND SONLIFE/GROWING A HEALTHY CHURCH

The first chapter of *Growing a Healthy Church*, by Dann Spader, begins with the

telling illustration of Vince Lombardi in his last season as head coach of the Green Bay

Packers. It was the day after a humiliating defeat, and there was little he could say that

had not already been said.

> In a deliberate manner he brought everyone's attention back to the basics with five
> simple words: "Men, this is a football." One of his players, who understood
> exactly how badly they needed to review the essentials spoke up, "Hold on, Coach,
> you're going too fast!"[1]

Dann Spader, the founder of Sonlife Ministries,[2] has led a passionate charge for

more than twenty years to help the church re-discover "the purpose that lies at the heart

of everything we do"[3] and how the church is to fulfill that purpose. Through an

extensive study of a harmony of the Gospels, he concluded that the message of Jesus to

the church was the clear command in Matthew 28:18-20: "Make disciples."[4]

> The task before the leaders of His church today is really no different than it was for
> those who formed that initial cadre of believers. *We are called to restore to the
> local church a passion for obeying the Great Commission.*[5]

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[1] Dann Spader and Gary Mayes, *Growing a Healthy Church* (Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 1991), 13.

[2] As of 2006, Dann Spader has withdrawn from leading Growing a Healthy Church.

[3] *Ibid.*, 14.

[4] *Ibid.*, 15.

[5] *Ibid.*, 16.

Figure 3-1
The Disciplemaking Philosophy of Growing a Healthy Church[6]

The eleven disciples who heard the command knew exactly what Jesus meant. Spader

defines a disciple from his study of the gospels:

> A disciple is literally a follower, a pupil, a learner, an apprentice. He is one who
> had decided not only to follow his master but also to become like him. In the book
> of Acts the term was used to denote members of the new religious community, so it
> was almost synonymous with the term "Christian." . . . It is not a mystical

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[6] Dann Spader, *Growing a Healthy Church: The Strategy of Jesus* (Elburn, Illinois: Sonlife
Ministries, 2000), 9.

superspiritual quality but simply describes a person who follows Christ and intends to become like his Master.[7]

He concludes that a discipling ministry includes "winning people to the Savior, building them up in their faith, and equipping them to win and build others."[8]

While programs in a church are necessary for carrying out its purposes, they often can take on a life of their own. Frequently, 80 – 90% of the programs of a church focus on building the believer, leaving inadequate time, energy, and manpower to focus on winning and equipping.[9] Programs should develop a well-balanced ministry—"the kind that can minister to people at various levels of spiritual maturity and interest." These he identifies as six types, all who should be primary targets of the ministries of the church:

The secular, or lost, person

The disinterested, fringe attender

The curious seeker

The growing Christian

The serving Christian

The leader/shepherd

From his harmony of the gospels, Spader discovered that the ministry of Jesus could be best understood as four phases: Phase 1—Building a Foundation, Phase 2—Equipping a Team, Phase 3—Winning the Masses, and Phase 4—Restructuring for Multiplication.

Paul said, "follow me as I follow Christ." Spader contends that the purpose and methodology of the church are taught and modeled for us in the ministry of Christ.

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[7] Spader, *Growing a Healthy Church*, 20.
[8] *Ibid.*
[9] *Ibid.*, 26.

Figure 3-2

The Disciplemaking Process of Growing a Healthy Church[10]
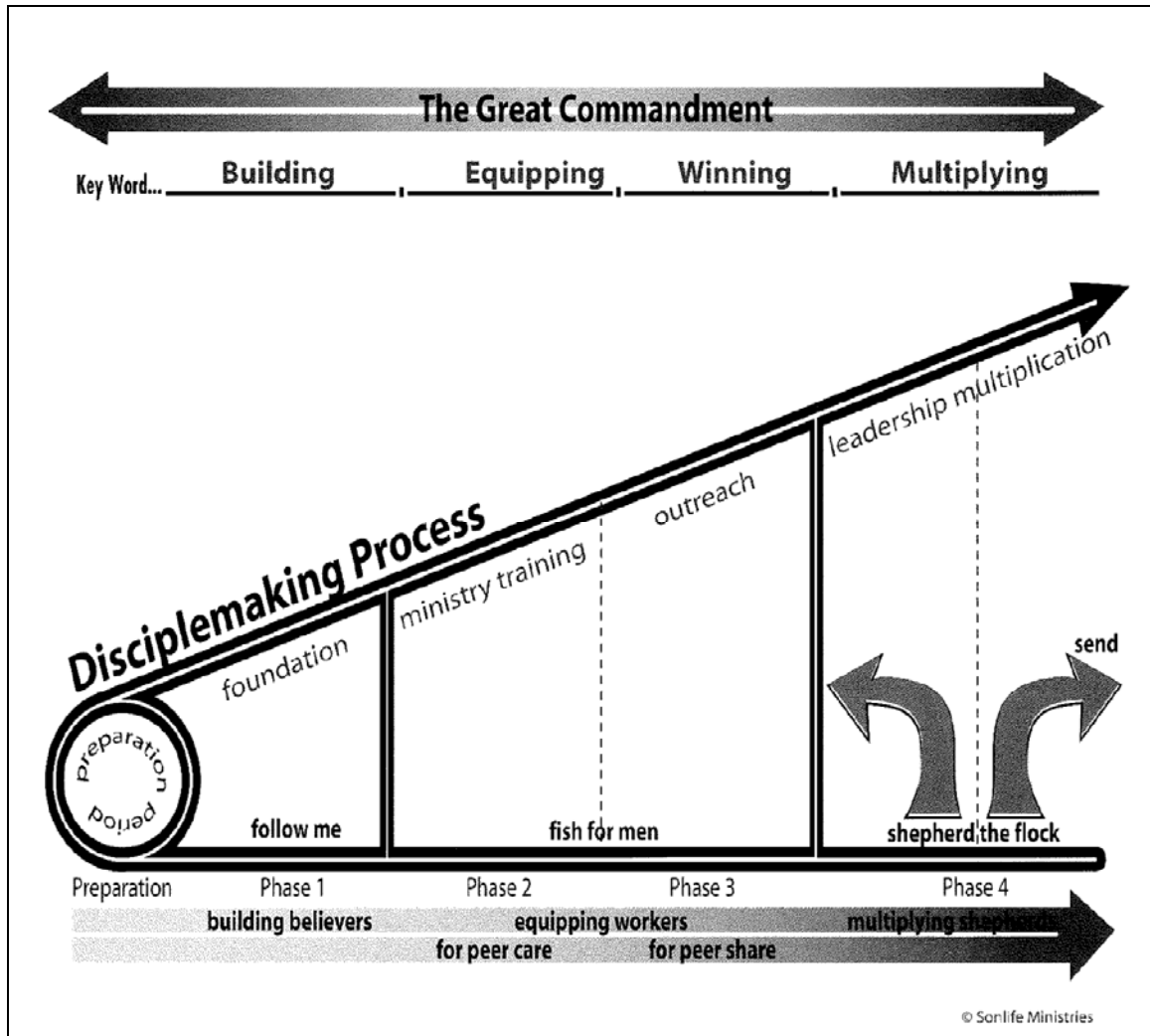
Phase 1—Building a Foundation

The first year and a half of Jesus' ministry, from his baptism to the rejection at

Nazareth, was spent in developing a close relationship with a small group of people who

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[10] Dann Spader, *Growing a Healthy Church: The Strategy of Jesus*, 8.

would become his disciples. Spader calls this the Foundation Phase, which is centered on

six principles that run throughout Christ's ministry:

    1. A strong prayer base. From a study of eleven gospel passages on the prayer life

of Christ, Spader points out, "The intimacy and dependence of prayer is the most

foundational of all priorities in Christ's strategy—every area of ministry must be

saturated with prayer!"[11]

    2. Intentional relationships. When "The Word became flesh and made his

dwelling among us,"[12] He was continually building relationships with people where they

lived. Spader notes that His priority, however, was to spend the most time with a few

before he moved them into ministry and leadership.

    3. An atmosphere of love. Christ was the very incarnation of His teachings on

love, which Paul modeled and amplified. Spader writes,

> Teachers and preachers of the Word wish to believe that our eloquent speaking skill
> is all that is needed to effect life-change in people. We know in our hearts it is not
> true because we understand our utter dependence on the work of the Spirit. But do
> we understand the essential component of love in the growth process? The degree
> to which we are effective in communicating love is the degree to which we will see
> our people grow in Jesus Christ.[13]

    4. A proper concept of Christ. As Jesus spent the first year teaching his followers

who he was, we must communicate the person of Christ clearly to believers today.

People have wrong concepts of who Christ is and what he has done for us, undermining

their ability to trust Him and serve Him with the right motives and methods.

    5. A healthy ministry image. A negative stereotype of the church exists in the

world today. Rather, as with the disciples and Jesus, there should be an atmosphere of

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[11] *Ibid.*, 60.

[12] John 1:14 NIV.

[13] Spader, *Growing a Healthy Church*, 61.

expectancy and hope within the church that overflows. Acts 2:46-47 describes this atmosphere when the church was born.

6. The centrality of God's Word. Jesus proclaimed the Word of God with authority, because "lives are transformed by interaction with God and His Word."[14]

These six principles remain in effect not only for the foundational phase, but through the other three phases as well.

Phases 2, 3 and 4

The second phase of Jesus' ministry was to train some of his disciples to minister. He called twelve into an apprentice relationship with him as leaders. He gave them practical training, hands-on experience, and deeper teachings on ministry. Spader translates this into three actions of leadership:

1. Leadership must begin to prioritize the few—developing a team of workers to share in the work of the ministry.

2. Leadership needs to think differently—committing themselves to spend time with those who are healthy.

3. Leadership needs to develop a plan "to impart their lives" on a regular basis to this team of workers.[15]

In Phase 3, Winning the Masses, Jesus employed three kinds of evangelism: personal,[16] small-group home,[17] and mass evangelism.[18] He then sent his disciples out twice, the second time in a larger group, to experience the joy of witnessing for Christ. From this, Spader identifies these priorities for the local church:

1. Helping those in our church be successful in teaching their friends for Christ.

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[14] Spader, *Growing a Healthy Church: The Strategy of Jesus*, 52.
[15] *Ibid.*, 58.
[16] Mark 6:7-13.
[17] Mark 1:29-34, Luke 5:27-32.
[18] Matt. 4:23-25, 14:15-21, 15:32-38.

2. Equipping those in our ministry in the skills of cultivating . . . sowing . . . (and) reaping . . .

3. Conducting regular outreach events (harvest vehicles) designed to expose new people to Jesus Christ—creating a godly enthusiasm for outreach.[19]

In Phase 4, Restructuring for Multiplication, leaders have to be selected, as Jesus did with the twelve. "A shepherd (leader) is a worker who has proven himself faithful and able (II Timothy 2:2) in serving others and is now given a segment of the flock to oversee and shepherd (I Peter 5:3, Acts 20:28)."[20] Spader states that there are three priorities here:

1. Clearly define the role of leadership.

2. Prayerfully select surfacing leaders

3. Restructure for multiplication.[21]

Twelve Pieces of the Strategy

Altogether, Spader delineates "Twelve Pieces of the Growing a Healthy Church Strategy":

1. Prayer—The establishment of a church-wide PRAYER BASE for our Great Commission efforts (Col. 1:9-10).

2. Contacting—The recognition that RELATIONAL ministry is critical to the making of disciples. Ministry needs to happen "as we go" (Matt. 28:19) outside of the walls of the local church building as we seek to "impart our lives" to others (I Thes. 2:8).

3. Loving Relationships—A commitment to LOVE as Christ loved and to see HIS LOVE permeate out ministries (John 12:34-35).

4. Right Concept of Christ—Communicating the RIGHT CONCEPT OF CHRIST is foundational to Christian Growth and maturity. A grace-

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[19] *Ibid.*, 60.
[20] *Ibid.*, 62.
[21] *Ibid.*, 61-64.

orientation rooted in the character of God becomes the basis for all of our "doing" for God.

5. Image—A HEALTHY BIBLICAL IMAGE determines the degree to which the people will identify with our cause and seek to reach out to others. Leadership must address this priority as they seek to "make disciples."

6. Word—A commitment to the centrality of GOD'S WORD and involving people in a study of the Word of God (Heb. 4:12).

7. Building Events—A balanced GROWTH LEVEL environment which grounds believers in the key ingredients of prayer, fellowship, worship, and the Word (Acts 2:42-47).

8. Equipping Events—A balanced EQUIPPING LEVEL environment which trains workers in all that Christ commanded.

9. Regular Outreach Events—A balanced OUTREACH LEVEL environment which assists believers in successfully winning their peers to Christ (Philemon 1:6).

10. Program Balance—The church exists as God's chosen vehicle for assisting believers in the fulfillment of the Great Commission. This necessitates a BALANCE of winning, building, and equipping priorities.

11. Leadership Multiplication—Leadership MULTIPLICATION is best achieved by appointing workers who are faithful and able (II Tim. 2:2) to positions of overseeing segments of God's flock (I Peter 1:5).

12. Clear Vision—A clearly communicated VISION is essential for a body of believers to move forward in an organized and healthy manner (Hab. 2:2).

These are used in Figure 3-3 for comparison with the Revival Model.

Points of Agreement

The obvious conclusion, at first glance, is that the Sonlife/Growing a Healthy Church model does not line up well with the revival model. With only four points in common, not even a majority of either system are in agreement. One might argue that we are comparing the proverbial apple and orange. That may be true. However, just as an

apple and orange are both fruits with the same purpose of being nutritious for a body,

they beg comparison. GHC and Revival have the same health purposes, with different

Figure 3-3
Comparison of the Revival Model and Growing a Healthy Church

Revival Model	Dann Spader *Sonlife/Growing a Healthy Church*
1. Awakened believers humbly desire God's sovereign working	
2. High priority by leaders is given to revival	
3. Repentance, grace, and personal godliness are pursued openly	
4. Persistent prayer for revival is on-going	1. Prayer
5. The gospel and essential Bible doctrines are faithfully proclaimed	4. Right concept of Christ 6. The centrality of God's Word
6. Believers are discipled to seek, know, and serve God	7. Building events
7. Churches partner to bring revival to the community	
	2. Contacting, relational ministry
	3. Loving relationships
	5. Healthy biblical image
	8. Equipping events
	9. Regular outreach events
	10. Program balance
	11. Leadership multiplication
	12. Clear vision

emphases. The Revival Model prepares a church to experience health as the Spirit of

God moves in hearts, while GHC is broader, encompassing the church and leadership

issues that build on those revival experiences to deepen and strengthen the church.

Revival does not address equipping, and leadership development, or program balance.[22]
These are long-term issues with impact in the future. Revival is focused on the present
aspect of experiencing the fullness of God, with an eye on maintaining that experience.
That which might be most helpful for our purposes are an examination of the four points
where Sonlife/Growing a Healthy Church line up with the Revival Model.

1. Prayer base/ 4. Persistent prayer for revival is on-going. Surely Spader lists
prayer as the first piece, for both Scripture and history have shown that prayer is primary.
He writes, "The kingdom—God's rules and reign in the lives of His people—is a matter
of spiritual power. God's work in people's lives is not merely enhanced human
endeavor. It is the supernatural work of a supernatural God invading the natural world of
our lives."[23] Among the several methods for encouraging more intelligent and consistent
prayer, he lists prayer meetings, concerts of prayer, specific days of prayer and fasting,
and prayer journals or notebooks.[24] All of these were employed in the days of revival
history, with great spiritual reward.

4. Right concept of Christ/ 5. The gospel and essential Bible doctrines are
faithfully proclaimed. Noting in the gospels that Jesus was constantly addressing
erroneous beliefs as to His identity, Spader believes that the same challenge is as great or
even greater today. "Misconceptions and disinformation about the Person, the work, and
the message of Christ abound in our day as well."[25] Church leaders need to be vigilant in
studying their culture and congregation to discern what is the wrong thinking about the

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[22] At least in the model it does not address them. Equipping and leadership development were a
major concern of men like Finney, who decried the poor preparation of pastors in the traditional
seminaries and urged that training be changed. Finney, *Lectures*, 123-24.

[23] Spader, *Growing a Healthy Church*, 100.

[24] *Ibid.*, 104.

[25] *Ibid.*, 79.

person of Christ and the Christian faith, and what must be communicated for correction

and the fuller experience of fellowship with Him. The pattern of Scripture itself is to

declare who God is and what He has done for us.[26] A study of the messages delivered

during revivals would show that declaring the person of Christ accurately was a high

priority.

6. The centrality of God's Word/ 5. The gospel and essential Bible doctrines are
faithfully proclaimed. The centrality of God's Word can also be folded into point five of

the Revival Model. Spader's concern is that leaders do not fall into four specific dangers:

teaching about the Word, teaching less than the whole counsel of God, teaching human

wisdom, and using the Word as a club.[27] The Revival Model takes this further to

emphasize the biblical teaching of major Bible doctrines. Gerald McDermott, a church

historian, commented:

> Revival preachers in the 18th century explicitly denounced "legalistic" and
> "rationalistic" preaching that taught "mere morality." In contrast, they emphasized
> justification by faith in the atoning work of the Christ. Wesley taught the absolute
> necessity of the new birth, and George Whitefield borrowed from the Wesley
> brothers, John and Charles, their emphasis on faith alone as the prerequisite for
> salvation.[28]

John Armstrong made it clear: "Doctrinal preaching and emphasis has always been linked

to seasons of real revival. The Word of God is central to revival, and the central

doctrines of Scripture are the features of revival."[29]

4. Building events/ 6. Believers are discipled to seek, know, and serve God. In

GHC, the process of disciplemaking is to win the lost, build believers, equip workers, and

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[26] *Ibid.*, 83.

[27] *Ibid.*, 109-110.

[28] John H. Armstrong, *When God Moves* (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 1988), .73, Gerold McDermott, "The Eighteenth Century Awakening: A Reminder for American Evangelicals in the 1990's," published as a special supplement in National & International Religion Report (Roanoke, VA: December 14, 1992), 2.

[29] *Ibid.*, 74.

multiply leaders, of which some are to be sent. The problem is that "frequently 80-90%

of a church's efforts are geared for the growing Christian, and little or no corporate

efforts are focused on other levels of spiritual need."[30] Building events, to Spader, are

what the church usually does well, to the neglect of evangelism, equipping, and

leadership multiplication. That's not to say helping a believer grow is not important. It is

essential, as those of the Revival Model insisted. Thus, Jonathan Edwards continued the

Puritan model of home meetings during the week for training and application of the

Word, and John Wesley developed a system of cell groups for discipling believers with

accountability.

These four points of agreement between Growing a Healthy Church and the

Revival Model should be an encouragement to pastors and church leaders to include as a

strategic part of their church's approach to ministry. Spader has shown they are

scriptural, and revival history has proven them essential to experience the fullness of

church health.

That is not to say that the points of non-alignment are spurious or unnecessary.

Comparisons with other church health systems in this project will re-visit some of the

overlooked points of the Growing a Healthy Church model, as well as the Revival model.

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[30] Spader, *Growing a Healthy Church*, 26.

CHAPTER 4

CHURCH HEALTH ON PURPOSE:

RICK WARREN AND THE PURPOSE-DRIVEN PARADIGM

The Saddleback Phenomena

"If God allowed you to baptize 671 new believers, add almost 1,200 new members, and increase your average attendance by 2000 in just 40 days, would you call that a revival?"[1] It is an excellent question posed by Rick Warren as he describes what is happening in the Saddleback Community Church where he is senior pastor.

Actually, the statistics that encircle the ministry of Rick Warren are much more astounding. His book, *The Purpose-Driven Church*, has a distribution of over 1 million, and he has taught the principles to over 350,000 church leaders from 120 countries.[2] His email newsletter is sent to 120,000 pastors, and his web-site has daily activity of over 60,000 people. His most popular book, *The Purpose-Driven Life*, was listed as first or second on the *New York Times* bestseller list for almost two years, and has sold over a million copies per month. Saddleback Church, the ministry Rick Warren began twenty five years ago in Lake Forest, California, now averages 20,000 in attendance each weekend on its 120 acre campus.

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[1] Rick Warren, "Revival, Awakening, or Miracle?" *Rick Warren's Ministry Tool Box* 84 (8 January 2003); available from http://www.pastors.com/RWMT/?ID=84; Internet; accessed June 1, 2006.
[2] "The Saddleback Story." *Saddleback Church*; available from http://www.saddleback.com/flash/story.asp.; Internet; Accessed June 1, 2006.

Time magazine named Warren "America's most influential minister,"[3] an honor *Christianity Today* had already bestowed on him.[4] Peter Drucker, known as the dean of American management, calls Rick Warren "the inventor of perpetual revival" and Saddleback's organizational model as "the most significant sociological phenomena of the second half of this century."[5]

The Five Purposes of the Purpose-Driven Church

Using the metaphor of surfing, so familiar to his setting in Southern California, Rick Warren reveals the starting point of his theology on church health: "Our job as church leaders, like experienced surfers, is to recognize God's wave and ride it. It is not our responsibility to *make* the waves but to recognize how God is working in the world and join him in the endeavor."[6]

Pastors and churches need to be taught the necessary skills so they do not miss the spiritual waves that bring revival, health, and explosive growth to our churches. "It takes more than dedication to lead a church to grow; it takes skill. . . . Sharpen your ministry ax by reading books, attending conferences, listening to tapes, and by observing working models."[7] Warren sees this in Paul's life: "The reason the apostle Paul was so effective in planting and developing churches was because he was skilled at it. He admits this in

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[3] Sonja Steptoe, "Time 100: Scientists and Thinkers: A Pastor with a Purpose," *Time Magazine* (18 April 2005); 108.

[4] Tim Stafford, "A Regular Purpose-Driven Guy,"*Christianity Today* (8 November 2002); 42.

[5] "The Saddleback Story", *Ibid*., 1.

[6] Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Church*, 40. All italics, capitalizations, and underlining belong to the original authors.

[7] *Ibid.*, 57.

1 Corinthians 3:10: 'By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an *expert builder*' . . . Paul was an expert at building churches."[8]

"Every church is driven by something. There is a purpose, a guiding force, a controlling assumption, a directing conviction behind everything that happens."[9] It might be tradition, personality, finances, programs, events, or seekers. The starting point, according to Warren, is for every church to answer the question, "Why do we exist?"[10]

His answer to that question is found in the five purposes of the church found in the New Testament, particularly the Great Commandment in Matthew 22:37-40 and the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20, and lived out in Acts 2:42-47.   "A purpose-driven church is committed to fulfilling all five tasks that Christ ordained for his church to accomplish . . ."[11]

Purpose #1: Love the Lord with all your heart. The greatest commandment, according to Jesus, was to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."[12]   Warren titles this *worship* or *magnify*, which the early church did when they devoted themselves to the breaking of bread and prayers. We love the Lord with all of our heart by worshipping him, whether alone or with others. It is not out of duty, but from our hearts. In worship, we find power to live and serve.

Purpose # 2: Love your neighbor as yourself. The second greatest commandment is *service* or *ministry*. "Ministry is demonstrating God's love to others by meeting their needs and healing their hurts in the name of Jesus."[13] These needs can be spiritual,

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[8] *Ibid.*, 57-8.
[9] *Ibid.*, 77.
[10] *Ibid.*, 81.
[11] *Ibid.*,103.
[12] Matt. 22:37 NIV.
[13] *Ibid.*, 104.

Figure 4-1
The Five Purposes of the Purpose-Driven Church[14]

Explaining the Church's Purposes

Purpose	Task	Acts 2:42-47	Objective	Target	Life Component	Basic Human Need	The Church Provides	Emotional Benefit
Outreach	Evangelize	"…added to their number daily those who were being saved."	Mission	Community	My **Witness**	**Purpose** to Live For	A **Focus** for Living	Significance
Worship	Exalt	"They devoted themselves to… breaking of bread and prayers… praising God."	Magnify	Crowd	My **Worship**	**Power** to Live On	A **Force** for Living	Stimulation
Fellowship	Encourage	"…devoted to the fellowship…all the believers were together …they ate together."	Membership	Congregation	My **Relationships**	**People** to Live With	A **Family** for Living	Support
Discipleship	Edify	"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching."	Maturity	Committed	My **Walk**	**Principles** to Live By	A **Foundation** for Living	Stability
Service	Equip	"They gave to anyone as he had need."	Ministry	Core	My **Work**	**Profession** to Live Out	A **Function** for Living	Self-expression

emotional, relational, or physical. The early church gave to "anyone as he had need."[15] Unfortunately, according to Warren, ministry is often pre-empted by meetings, and faithfulness is determined by attendance.

Purpose # 3: Go and make disciples. The purpose every believer has been given is to evangelize the community. It is the heart of the Great Commission, "Make disciples of all nations," and was lived out in the beginning of the church as "their numbers were added to daily."[16] Warren calls this purpose *outreach* or *mission*, where the church evangelizes its community. "It is every Christian's responsibility to share the good news wherever we go."[17] It is our great privilege to share the greatest news of all.

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[14] Warren, *Ibid.*, 119.
[15] Acts 2:45 NIV.
[16] Matt. 28:19, Acts 2:47 NIV.
[17] Warren, *Ibid*., 104.

Purpose # 4: Baptizing them. Baptism symbolizes a believer's identification with the local church. It says to the world, "This person is now one of us!"[18] Thus, it speaks to *fellowship* or *membership*. The early church in Acts 2 "devoted themselves to the fellowship."[19] Here, Warren reveals his Southern Baptist heritage, where baptism by immersion upon confession of faith and entrance to membership are closely linked.[20]

Purpose # 5: Teaching Them to Obey. Teaching is the process of *discipleship*, where we bring one into *maturity*. It is "the process of helping people become more like Christ in their thoughts, feelings, and actions."[21] Discipleship is Warren's primary means of bringing Christ-likeness to a believer.

Warren's delineation of these five purposes of the church give a definitive statement that most church leaders can readily own as both biblical and practical. He believes they are the biblical purposes of the church, by which one's church, life, and small group should be driven.[22]

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[18] *Ibid*., 105.

[19] Acts 2:42 NIV.

[20] The Baptist Faith and Mission statement of the Southern Baptist Convention includes this statement on baptism, "Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper." "Baptist Faith and Mission"; available from http://www.sbc.net/bfm/bfm2000.asp

[21] Warren, *Ibid*., 106.

[22] These five are re-stated in various way throughout Warren's writings: magnify, ministry, mission, membership, maturity; and edify, encourage, exalt, equip and evangelize (*The Purpose-Driven Church*, 106). In *The Purpose-Driven Life* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2002) the five appear in a different order and format:
      Purpose # 1: You were planned for God's pleasure
      Purpose # 2: You were formed for God's family
      Purpose # 3: You were created to become like Christ
      Purpose # 4. You were shaped for serving God
      Purpose # 5: You were made for a mission.
In *Better Together*, they appear as:
      We're commissioned to reach out together
      We're chosen to fellowship together
      We're connected to grow together
      We're called to serve together
      We're connected to grow together.
Rick Warren, *Better Together* (Lake Forest, Calif.: Purpose-Driven Publishing, 2004).

They are foundational and not hard to find in the teachings and practices of God's church throughout the ages. The first purpose, to love the Lord with all of our heart, has been the primary point of many a message on revival. Do we love the Lord with all of our heart, and worship him as he should be worshipped? Sometimes the application is broader than worship, yet few would contend that worship is not primary. In loving our neighbors, one of Jonathan Edward's published sermon series, *Charity and Its Fruit,* revealed his belief that the presence or absence of love for one another was the best test of discerning whether one's Christian experience was real.[23] No one among the figures of revival history would contend with evangelism as a major task of the church, for that was their heartbeat as well. Edwards rejoiced in the estimate that 300 townspeople had been converted within three months, and that nearly all the adults of Northampton were communicant members of his church.[24] By the time of Finney, most of the evangelical church saw that revival was the essential means to the "conversion of sinners to God"[25] In Edward's day, membership was held in high respect, though controversy encircled over who was qualified to join a church. In his Reformed theology, baptism was for infants and membership was through a covenant. A century later, Finney, who saw many non-churched come to Christ, was strong on membership. His counsel was that young converts should immediately apply for membership at a church.[26] It might only be in this last century that church membership in some evangelical churches has been downplayed to be more inclusive of all who attend. Teaching toward maturity has also been a priority of the church throughout history. All of the preachers in revival history held a high view

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[23] George M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003), 190.
[24] Edwards, *Ibid.*, 160.
[25] Charles G. Finney, *Lectures on Revival* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1988), 15.
[26] Finney, *Ibid.*, 241.

of Scripture, and used it as the basis of edification in their many preaching and teaching opportunities. Even in small groups and personal devotions, teaching from the Word was a primary discipline.[27]

Strategy and Implementation

The popularity of the purpose-driven paradigm lies firmly in its evangelical roots and passion. Rick Warren has been able to identify with the heart of many frustrated pastors who desire to see their churches be effective in winning the lost and incorporating them into the local church. It certainly helps that he has been so successful in doing so himself.

Identifying the five purposes is only the beginning for Warren. He stresses that, in accordance with the organizational methods of our day, these purposes must be developed into a concise purpose statement that keeps the church on task.[28] A vision must then be stated, and a target identified. These must be regularly communicated to the congregation at least monthly in a variety of ways.

As for organization and strategy, Warren makes an interesting point from revival history:

> The two most influential preachers of the eighteenth century were George Whitefield and John Wesley…Whitefield was best known for his preaching. In his lifetime, he preached over 18,000 sermons, averaging ten a week! He once spoke to nearly 100,000 people near Glasgow, Scotland, and his preaching tours in America stimulated the revival known as the Great Awakening. However, biographers have pointed out that Whitefield often left his converts without any

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[27] Edwards found in his early revival experiences that the small groups of the Puritan movement worked well for "the encouragement of lay spirituality" (Marsden, *Ibid*., 156). Small groups were the main discipling centers for Wesley's Methodism. Finney devotes three chapters of Lessons on Revival to the instruction of new believers.

[28] Warren is unabashedly appreciative of Peter Drucker, who represents the secular principles and methods of organization that *The Purpose-Driven Church* espouses. These would have been foreign to the leaders of the church during the First and Second Great Awakenings. Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Church*, 90, 93.

organization so the results of his work were of short duration. Today, few Christians would recognize George Whitefield's name.

In contrast, John Wesley's name is still recognized by millions of Christians. Why is this? Wesley was an itinerant preacher just like Whitfield, engaging in large, outdoor evangelistic meetings. But Wesley was also an organizer. He created an organizational structure to fulfill his purpose that far outlasted his lifetime. That organization is called the Methodist Church!

For any renewal to last in a church, there must be a structure to nurture and support it. It is not enough to merely define a purpose statement and communicate it, you must also organize around your church, around your purposes."[29]

On this, Rick Warren has excelled. Saddleback Community Church has been rigorous in applying its purpose and vision to every part of the church: "programming, budgeting, staffing, preaching, and so forth . . ."[30] Everything is driven by these purposes.

These purposes are to be aimed at a target. Saddleback has affectionately named the composite profile of their target group "Saddleback Sam." He reflects the type of people who are already in the church, as well as the typical members of the community they are seeking to reach. His habits, life style, and preferences are noted and taken into consideration as the church applies its purposes. Targeting your audience, according to Warren, is what Jesus did when he stated that he was sent to "the lost sheep of Israel" and when Paul realized that he was to minister to the Gentiles while Peter ministered to the Jews.[31] "I believe that the most effective evangelistic strategy is to first try to reach those with whom you already have something in common."[32] Warren identifies Christ's

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[29] Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Church*, 121-2.
[30] *Ibid.*, 137, Matt. 15:22-28, 10:5-6, Gal. 2:7.
[31] *Ibid*., 158.
[32] *Ibid*., 173.

methodology in Matthew 10 and Luke 10 as the "five fishing guidelines" he uses as his

strategy for evangelism.[33]

Clearly, Warren is a product of the organizational thinking of our day, yet he

seeks to be thoroughly based in Scripture. One cannot fault his focus on planning and

strategy unless it is an alternative to prayerful dependence on the Holy Spirit, which is an

accusation he would deny.[34]

Presumption occurs when the church believes that it can in its own strength bring

about the expansion of the church by employing methodologies that are not found in

Scripture. That was the accusation against Finney, and has been leveled at Warren by his

detractors.[35]

The discomfort for those who appreciate revival tradition begins with Warren's

adaptation to culture in the employment of his strategy. In Jonathan Edwards' day, the

Christian church was the central focus of the community, and the pastor was their most

influential leader. In America today, the church has been isolated from the mainstream of

society and power, with many other religions and beliefs being seen as equally viable in

the eyes of the populace. In such a setting, Warren argues, we must do what Jesus did—

we must attract a crowd. He states, "Jesus did three things with crowds: He loved them

(Matt. 9:36, et al.), he met their needs (Matt. 15:30, Luke 6:17-18, John 6:2, et al.), and

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[33] *Ibid*., 186.

[34] On prayer, Warren is strong: "Of course, prayer is absolutely essential. Every step of Saddleback's development had been bathed in prayer." *Ibid.*, 58.

[35] Many of Warren's published detractors are to be found on the internet, often on sites devoted to warning the church of dangerous teachings and trends, such as Eastern Regional Watch at http://www.erwm.com, Southwest Radio Church Ministries at http://www.swrc.com, Richard Beacon at http://www.bereanbeacon.org, and Shepherd's Fellowship with Nathan Busenitz at http://www.gracechurch.org/sfellowship and http://www.biblebb.com/files/purpose.htm. John MacArthur has entered the fray, addressing the *Purpose-Driven Life* in the recent book of which he was general editor: *Fools Gold* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2005).

he taught them in interesting and practical ways (Matt. 13:34, Mark 10:1, 12:37, et al.)

These same three ingredients will attract crowds today."[36]

For Rick Warren at Saddleback Community Church, the weekend worship services (Saturday evenings and Sunday mornings) are the best time to attract the crowd. The worship services are purposefully seeker sensitive, and the messages are practical and simple for the unchurched.   The service for believers is held on Wednesday nights. For Warren, "making a service 'comfortable' for the unchurched doesn't mean changing your theology. It means changing the environment."[37] Music is chosen to reflect the genre of the radio stations the non-churched people listen to. Messages are directed at the felt needs of the crowd. Everything done is evaluated in the light of reaching the identified target audience.[38]

The radical difference between a Saddleback worship service and one in Northhampton under Jonathan Edwards would certainly be cultural, but with theological implications. The shift that Warren has made in turning the Sunday morning worship into one primarily for the unchurched[39] would challenge the prevailing theology of Edward's day of the Christian Sabbath and the meaning of acceptable worship. The whole community of Northampton was expected to observe the Sabbath and be in

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[36] Warren, *Ibid.*, 208.

[37] *Ibid.*, 244.

[38] A point of discomfort that many pastors are experiencing with *The Purpose-Driven Church* is not in his principles or methodology, but in his application of them to his target culture. It would have been better if there was a clearer demarcation somewhere in parts three and four as to what is applicable uniquely for Saddleback, and what is prescriptive for all churches. He states that not all churches should be like Saddleback, but fails to give any other examples of how to apply the purpose-driven church principles. Many pastors have concluded that to be a purpose-driven church one must be seeker-sensitive in their worship services, with the music and messages planned with the unchurched in mind. That might not be true beyond the Saddleback Valley, or even for churches within the valley who are not to target Saddleback Sam. This author is informed that the Purpose-Driven Church Seminars address this matter in depth.

[39] There is a tension in saying that believers are the only ones who can worship (*Ibid.*, 239) yet the main worship services are designed with the unchurched in mind. That could well be why many believers are frustrated with the seeker sensitive approach.

morning worship. This was handed down from their Puritan heritage,[40] which had not yet

been challenged by outside influences. All were taught in the Christian faith since

childhood, though not all could give evidence of true conversion. The culture was

Christian. The singing was from the psalms and the services were planned for the

believer. Edward's messages on Sundays were largely directed to the believer around the

full range of Reformed doctrines.[41] The horrors of hell often became the subject, with the

purpose of reaching the unconverted present in the worship service. This would

especially be noted during seasons where an awakening was sensed.

In spite of the vast differences between Northampton and Saddleback, one

wonders that if Warren had the opportunity to present his strategy regarding culture to

Edwards, their organizational methodologies might be seen to have common ground

(That would be even more true with Finney). The theological differences, however, might

be insurmountable.

A major theological difference is the nature of the gospel taught and preached by

Rick Warren in contrast to that preached by Edwards, Finney, and those of the Great

Awakenings. In his best-selling book, *The Purpose-Driven Life*, Warren presents the

gospel in simple terms:

> Right now, God is inviting you to live for his glory by fulfilling the purposes he
> made for you. It's really the only way to live. Everything else is just existing.
> Real life begins by committing yourself completely to Jesus Christ. If you are not
> sure you have done this, all you need to do is *receive* and *believe*. The Bible
> promises, *"To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the
> right to become children of God."* . . . Will you accept God's offer?

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[40] The Puritan tradition often focused on Sabbath-breaking as a common issue of personal sin and repentance. See Charles H. Hambrick-Stowe, *The Practice of Piety: Puritan Devotional Disciplines in Seventeenth-Century New England* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982).

[41] Marsden, *Ibid*., 165.

First, believe. Believe God loves you and made you for his purposes. Believe you're not an accident. Believe you were made to last forever. Believe God had chosen you to have a relationship with Jesus, who died on the cross for you. Believe that no matter what you've done, God wants to forgive you.

Second, receive. Receive Jesus into your life as your Lord and Savior. Receive his forgiveness for your sins. Receive his Spirit, who will give you the power to fulfill your life purpose. The Bible says, *"Whoever accepts and trusts the Son gets in on everything, life complete and forever!"* . . . Wherever you are reading this, I invite you to bow your head and quietly whisper the prayer that will change your eternity: *"Jesus, I believe in you and receive you."* Go ahead.

If you sincerely meant that prayer, congratulations! Welcome to the family of God![42]

The sum total of the teaching on sin, repentance, and the meaning of the cross in this gospel presentation is the supportive clause "who died on the cross for you," referring to Jesus, and the second in a series of three explanatory statements of what you receive, "Receive his forgiveness for your sins."[43] It is not until Day 14 that Warren describes the cross of Christ in more detail, concluding by saying,

 Words cannot describe the darkness of that moment. Why did God allow and endure such ghastly, evil mistreatment? Why? So you could be spared from eternity in hell, and so you could share in his glory forever! The Bible says, *"Christ was without sin, but for our sake God made him share our sin in order that in union with him we might share the righteousness of God."*

Overall, issues of sin and repentance, a prevailing theme in revival history, are not dealt with in any depth. In fact, a review of the major Saddleback publications reveals that

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[42] Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Life*, 58-9. The verses quoted are John 1:12 and John 3:36a.

[43] There are two other matters of major concern in Warren's gospel that deserve treatment in another place: 1) he uses many Bible versions and paraphrases, sometimes inaccurately, and 2) his emphasis on self-fulfillment over self-denial (see Luke 14:26), as seen in the quote above and much of the *Purpose-Driven Life*. On the second, the appeal for the gospel is to choose to live for God rather than yourself, without ever addressing the sinfulness of living for oneself. For a treatment on self-love, see the fourth chapter of: Jonathan Edwards, *The Nature of True Virtue* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Ann Arbor Paperbacks, 1969). Also see: Joanna McGrath and Alister McGrath, *The Dilemma of Self-Esteem: the Cross and Christian Confidence* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1992).

these themes are not brought up until baptismal preparation and further discipleship teachings.[44]

Insight into Warren's gospel is found in the methodology he follows at Saddleback Community Church, where the weekend worship services are filled with both the "congregation" (membership) and the "crowd" (uncommitted attenders), the latter having "questionable lifestyles, sinful habits, and even notorious reputations."[45] As sanctification comes after salvation, the issues of sin are primarily dealt with after one comes to Christ.[46] Warren writes, "Jesus did not say, 'Clean up your act and then I'll save you.' He loved you even before you changed. And he expects you to do the same with other people. I can't count the large number of couples who started attending Saddleback while living together and, once they were saved, asked to be married."[47]

For Warren, people come to Christ because of their need, and afterward they deal with the issues of sin in the process of sanctification. He defends this:

> Today, "preaching to felt needs" is scorned and criticized as a cheapening of the Gospel and a sellout to consumerism. I want to state this in the clearest way possible: Beginning a message with people's felt needs is more than a marketing tool! It is based on the theological fact that God chooses to reveal himself to man according to *our* needs! Both the Old and New Testaments are filled with examples of this.
>
> Even the names of God are revelations of how God meets our felt needs! Throughout history when people have asked God, "What is your name?" God's response has been to reveal himself according to what they needed at that time: To those who needed a miracle, God revealed himself as Jehovah Jireh (I am your provider); to those who needed comfort, God revealed himself as Jehovah Shalom (I am your peace); to those who needed salvation, God revealed himself as Jehovah Tsidkenu (I am your righteousness). The examples go on and on. God meets us

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[44] See Appendix 2: "Concerns Regarding the Gospel as Presented by Rick Warren" for an in-depth critique of his gospel presentation and the place of repentance.

[45] Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Church*, 217.

[46] *Ibid*., 216.

[47] *Ibid*., 218.

Table 4-2
Comparison of the Revival Model,
Growing a Healthy Church, and the Purpose-Driven Church

Revival Model	Dann Spader *Sonlife/Growing a Healthy Church*	Rick Warren *Purpose-Driven Church*
1. Awakened believers humbly desire God's sovereign working		1. Worship
2. High priority by leaders is given to revival		
3. Repentance, grace, and personal godliness are pursued openly		
4. Persistent prayer for revival is on-going	1. Prayer base	(Prayer acknowledged)
5. The gospel and essential Bible doctrines are faithfully proclaimed	4. Right concept of Christ	(Gospel emphasized)
	6. The centrality of God's Word	
6. Believers are discipled to seek, know, and serve God	7. Building events	5. Discipleship
7. Churches partner to bring revival to the community		
	2. Contacting, relational ministry	
	3. Loving relationships	4. Fellowship
	5. Healthy biblical image	
	8. Equipping events	2. Ministry
	9. Regular outreach events	3. Evangelism
	10. Program balance	
	11. Leadership multiplication	
	12. Clear vision	
		1. Worship

where we are, at our point of need. Preaching to felt needs is a theologically sound approach to introducing people to God.[48]

One could argue that Warren has neglected the issue of prior covenant relationship in God's revelations of His names to Israel. They were hardly the unchurched. Certainly, we must note that this approach is radically different from the

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[48] *Ibid*., 295-6.

preaching of earlier days. While on methodology Warren and Finney seem to think alike, on theology of conversion they appear far apart.[49]

<center>Revival by Discipleship</center>

In comparing the Purpose-Driven Church to the Revival Model of Chapter Two, the purpose of worship, to love the Lord with all your heart, approximates the first principle of revival, where awakened believers humbly desire God's Sovereign work. The purposes of ministry, evangelism, and fellowship are not foreign to revival church history, though they are not enunciated in the revival model. They certainly align well with Spader's *Growing a Healthy Church*.[50]

Warren's fifth principle, discipleship, is most akin to the revival model. It is in his 101, 201, and 301 classes that the believer is discipled to "seek, know, and serve God." It is in his Celebrate Recovery program that "repentance, grace, and personal godliness are pursued openly."[51] Unfortunately, it is impossible to compare the quality of believers of Northampton with those of Saddleback, to see if the results of revival and the results of discipleship are similar.

Perhaps the revival approach of old was good for its day, but new cultures have arisen and another day has come. Could it be that God is now working in a new way? Not to propose changing the gospel, nor to affirm Warren that conversion has occurred with a "receive and believe" process, but could it be that conversion is a process, and the means to the results of earlier revival today is best through discipleship?

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[49] See pages 13-14 of Chapter 2 regarding Finney's approach to revival.
[50] See Chapter 3 for treatment of *Growing a Healthy Church*.
[51] Principles 6 & 3 of the revival model.

<center>50</center>

Warren is persuasive when he shows how Jesus attracted and ministered to the crowd. Perhaps we have too often failed to distinguish his words to the crowd from his words to the Jewish leaders. Jesus was incensed by the hypocrisy and sin of the Pharisees and teachers of the law, but was a friend of tax collectors and sinners. It is worthwhile to ask at what point conversion occurred for the many who believed in Jesus in the gospel of John, where belief seems to have been exercised in different ways, sometimes by the same disciples.[52] Could some of the evidences of conversion that Wesley and his contemporaries sought be actually post-conversion works of sanctification? And, maybe "victory over sin" is a matter of maturing in Christ, not a definitive evidence of salvation.[53]

If the Saddleback phenomena is indeed perpetual revival, it is what Edwards longed for and Finney thought he could bring into being through prayer, new measures, and faithful preaching.

Is revival through discipleship more true to the New Testament? Warren would answer, "Yes." God's plan was not for us to wait for visitations of divine favor by the Holy Spirit, for the Holy Spirit has been given to the church to be actively pursuing the full fruits of what is called revival right now through discipleship. Sanctification is one of the results of revival, and bearing fruit is another. Warren rightfully challenges pastors on this. From the Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25:14-30, he concludes: "The point of the story is clear: God expects to see results. Our faithfulness is demonstrated by our fruit. Faithfulness is accomplishing as much as possible with the resources and talents

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[52] An excellent treatment of the levels of belief in the Gospel of John is found in Merrill C. Tenney, *John: The Gospel of Belief* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1948).
[53] Collins, *Ibid*., 100. Wesley did step back from excessive claims about his Aldersgate experience, 102.

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God has given you. . . . Success is not being larger than some other church, it is bearing as much fruit as possible given your gifts, opportunities, and potential."[54]

The question, then, is not whether this is revival as we define it, but if this is Kingdom work as God chooses to do it. Let every man be convinced in his own mind. If this is not a revival or an awakening, it is awfully close and possibly a prelude to something greater. Perhaps when Warren sharpens his conversion theology— recognizing that issues of repentance precede assurance of salvation—the Spirit of God will do even a greater work at Saddleback and the thousands of churches that the purpose driven paradigm now influences.

Rick Warren's personal rule is to never criticize anything that God is blessing.[55] If a church is growing, baptizing, and making an impact for the Kingdom of God, who can say that God is not blessing? Pastors who minister in the shadows of mega-churches wonder why God is not blessing their work in the same way. A temptation is to look for flaws and discount the work as compromising God's ways. One might even think that there has been an abandonment of the narrow way for a wide gate and a broad highway whose end is destruction.[56] There is no such road to destruction in the teachings of Rick Warren or Saddleback Community Church. Rather, there is the evidence of the Spirit of God.

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[54] Warren, *Ibid.*, 65.
[55] Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Church*, 62.
[56] Matt. 7:13.

CHAPTER 5

CHURCH HEALTH NATURALLY:

CHRISTIAN SCHWARZ AND NATURAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

Thousands of Churches Around the World

Moving to the forefront of the church health movement is Natural Church

Development. Based on an intense survey of one thousand churches in thirty-two

countries, it claims to have discovered the eight essential qualities for a healthy church.

In fifteen years, over twenty-six thousand churches from sixty countries have used its

assessment materials. The claim is that every church that hits the benchmark score of

sixty-five or above is experiencing health, and its ensuing growth.

Christian A. Schwarz is the founder of Natural Church Development, and the

president of NCD International, based in Germany. He has written several books on the

subject, explaining thoroughly how the eight quality characteristics of NCD combined

with six biotic ("life-giving") principles form a new paradigm for the church. This new

paradigm, according to Schwarz, is so significant that it should be seen as the third

reformation in church history.

The key principle in Natural Church Development is found in the phrase: "all by

itself." When Jesus in Matthew 6:28 said, "See how the lilies of the field grow," he used

an intensive verb form that had the sense of "conscious examination and study."[1] It was

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[1] K.H. Rengstorf, "Manthano," *Theoligisches Wörtenbuch zum Neuen Testament IV* ed. G. Kittel (Stuttgart, 1942), 416. Quoted in Christian A. Schwarz, *Paradigm Shift in the Local Church; How Natural*

from the growth mechanisms in particular that Jesus wanted them to study and take

direction. In the Parable of the Sower in Mark 4:26-29, the seed growing *by itself*

(Greek: *automate*) means that there is no apparent cause, but it was performed by God.

Modern science says these "automatisms," or growth mechanisms, in nature can be

discovered, and the Christian today knows that behind this order is still the Creator.

Natural Church Development is the study of how God grows his church, which is also an

organism, by scientifically discovering the growth mechanisms already within it. These

are the eight quality characteristics derived through sociological research.

Eight Quality Characteristics

The following characteristics form the core structure of Natural Church

Development. They are considered equal in importance. The weakest quality will

determine the level of health in the church.

1. Empowering Leadership. NCD research shows that healthy churches have

leaders that empower the church for ministry, according to the teaching of Ephesians

4:11-12. An important component of a leader's work will be equipping others for

effective ministry, which may force him to serve more as a trainer of a team than a

shepherd of sheep.[2] He develops a team of leaders with gifts and talents that complement

his own, so that he does not have to do everything.[3] "[Leaders] equip, support, motivate,

mentor, and coach individuals to become all that God wants them to be."[4]

Church Development Can Transform Theological Thinking (St. Charles, Ill.: ChurchSmart Resources, 1999), 234.

[2] Schwarz, *Paradigm Shift in the Local Church*, 187.

[3] Christian A. Schwarz and Christopher Schalk, *Implementation Guide to Natural Church Development* (Carol Stream, Ill.: ChurchSmart Resources, 1998), 48.

[4] *Minimum Factor Manual*, (Carol Stream, Ill.: ChurchSmart Resources, 1998), 4.

2. Gift-oriented Ministry. "When Christians serve in their area of giftedness, they generally function less in their own strength and more in the power of the Holy Spirit."[5] A popular tenet of the church growth movement, spiritual gift discovery and usage is the fulfillment of the Reformation's "priesthood of all believers," according to Schwarz. "In other words, if members do not discover and use their spiritual gifts, a church cannot expect great progress in any area of church development."[6]

3. Passionate Spirituality. "The quality characteristic 'passionate spirituality' demonstrates empirically the theological core of the matter in church growth: the life of faith as a genuine *relationship* with Jesus Christ."[7] Every church needs a contagious enthusiasm among its members, stemming from committed lives faithful in prayer and personal use of the Bible. This is not about a "particular style of spirituality (charismatic, non-charismatic, liturgical or non-liturgical, etc.), but… the level of passion in which faith is lived out by its members."[8]

4. Functional Structures. Schwarz states that there is not a prescribed New Testament organization or management program, nor a single church structure for today. This is more than a matter of pragmatism for Schwarz, it is a theological issue. "This quality characteristic signifies that it is not important how many or how few structures a church has, or whether its structures are old or new, but the criteria is how useful they are in a specific situation."[9] A healthy church is able to change its church structures so that it better focuses on its philosophy of ministry, with the dimension of multiplication of

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[5] Christian A. Schwarz, *Natural Church Development: A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches* (Carol Stream, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1996), 24.
[6] Schwarz, *Implementation Guide*, 55.
[7] *Ibid*., 27.
[8] *Ibid*., 63.
[9] Schwarz, *Paradigm*, 159.

work. It is not bound by traditionalism nor ignored by spiritualism. The task is to seek the best structures to accomplish the intended purposes.

5. Inspiring Worship Services. By "inspiring," Schwarz refers to the Latin root *inspiratio*, where the Holy Spirit is clearly at work, making attendance not merely a duty, but a delight. "All the parts of a church service, from the seating arrangement to the music and to the message, should become more and more the vehicles through which the Spirit of God and God's love can be experienced in the community of Christians."[10] Schwarz takes this quality further, saying that "people attending truly 'inspired' services typically indicate that "going to church is fun.'"[11] The issue is not the style of worship (contemporary, traditional, seeker, etc.) nor the target audience. Rather, it is whether those who attend are able to share in the experience of "God's awesome presence."[12]

6. Holistic Small Groups. Deemed by the research of NCD to be the most important quality of the eight, if such a distinction were appropriate among equals, holistic small groups are those that go beyond Bible study to application in daily life. As disciple-making communities, they are "dedicated to answering the true questions and meeting the real needs of the members in a holistic way."[13] The result is service to others, both in and outside the groups, with a plan to multiply both groups and leaders.

7. Need-oriented Evangelism. In NCD, Christians do not need to seek additional relationships with the non-churched, for there is ample opportunity through the natural relationships they already have in their extended family of contacts. Efforts should be made to identify the needs of those friends and family, and ministries should be

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[10] Schwarz, *Implementation Guide*, 86.
[11] Schwarz, *Natural Church Development*, 31.
[12] *Minimum Factor Manual*, 5. This manual, author unknown, seems to import evangelical culture into Schwarz's writings to make it more palpable to the intended audience of ChurchSmart.
[13] Schwarz, *Implementation Guide*, 96.

developed to meet them in a way that is neither pushy nor manipulative.[14] Some ways

may be "help with homework, projects for the unemployed, sexual counseling, housing

assistance, and so forth."[15] Those with the spiritual gift of evangelism should be

strategically placed within these ministries to lead people to Christ.

8. Loving Relationships. The final quality characteristic focuses on "how

strongly (or weakly) the Christian ideal of love is practiced in the life of the church."[16] It

is measured in the practical effects of love, such as hospitality, transparency,

encouragement, and a sense of family. "Unfeigned practical love endows a church with a

much greater magnetic power than all the marketing efforts of this world."[17]

Preferred Implementation

When a church seeks to use Natural Church Development to pursue church

health, it is first encouraged to enter into a relationship with an NCD certified coach.

This usually is a pastor or church leader who comes alongside the pastor and leaders of

the church to explain the process and assist the church in its implementation.

A church health team is formed, comprised of spiritually mature church members

who are strategic thinkers able to see the big picture. This team, with the input of the

coach, will lead the church in addressing one of the eight characteristics for the next year.

A strength of NCD is its assessment tool, a survey of thirty leaders within the

church and the senior pastor. The answers to the questions are compared to those from

thousands of other churches, with computer-generated scoring. The goal is to receive a

65 on all eight characteristics, which by definition is a healthy church. A more practical
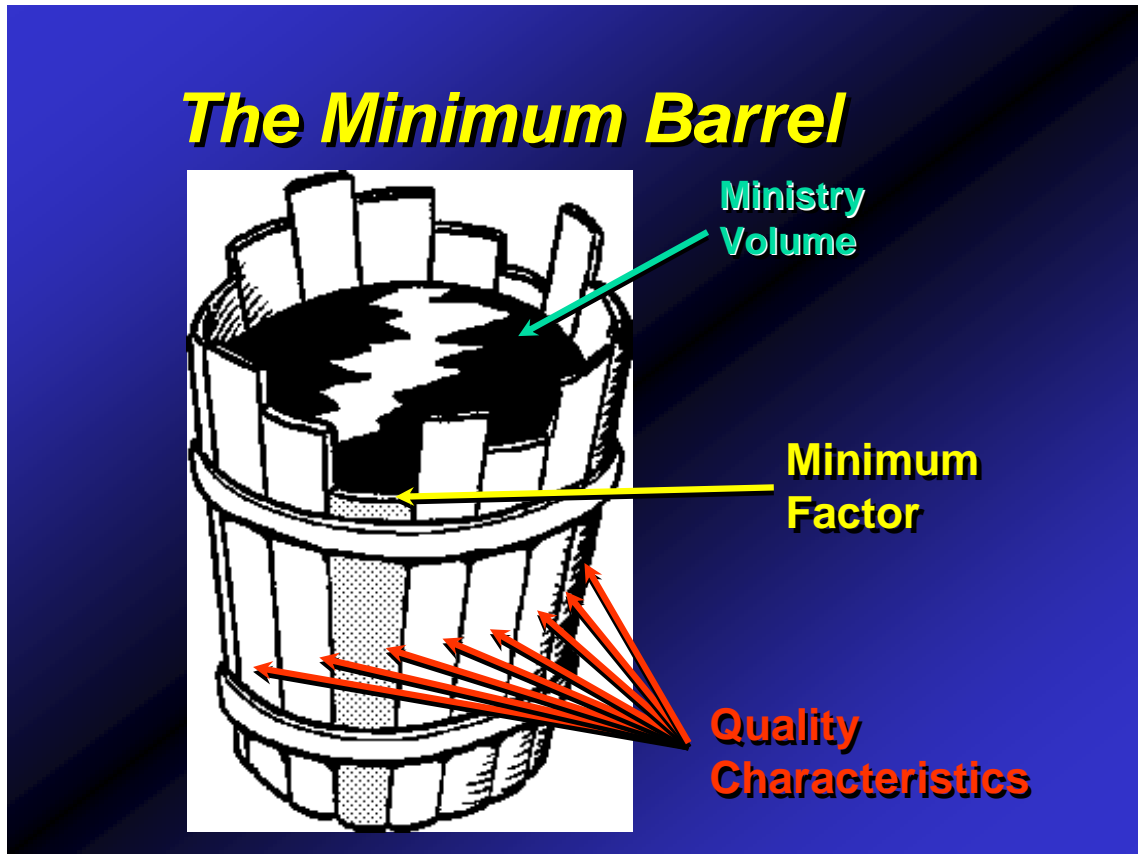
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[14] *Minimum Factor Manual*, 6.
[15] Schwarz, *Paradigm Shift*, 211.
[16] Ibid., 134.
[17] *Mimimum Factor Manual*, 6.

Figure 5-1
The Minimum Barrel[18]

goal is to score higher on the chosen minimum factor in a second survey taken after a

year of implementation.

The reason why a church is encouraged to focus on only one quality characteristic

is found in the analogy of a barrel with eight staves. The volume of that barrel is limited

to the lowest stave. Likewise, the ministry volume of a church is limited by the quality

identified as its minimum factor. Experience has proven that as that factor improves,

others are likewise affected, for they are interconnected.[19]

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[18] Schwarz, *Natural Church Development*, 53.
[19] This is the principle of interdependence, one of the six biotic principles. On the NCD web site, David Wetzler makes the claim that 85% of the churches in the United States that conduct a second survey are experiencing both qualitative and quantitative growth. See the video segment for the United States at http://www.ncd-international.org/public/videos.html Internet; accessed January 15, 2007.

Upon receiving the scoring of the survey and identifying its minimum factor, the church health team diagnoses the results, develops an action plan which it then implements and monitors, after which it evaluates by repeating the survey. The cycle begins again with the results of the new survey.

The Six Biotic Principles

The word "biotic" is unfamiliar to the Christian world,[20] but is pivotal in the paradigm of natural church development. It emphasizes "life" over machine, and the church as an organism rather than an organization. This is influenced by the work of Frederic Vester in his book, *New Horizons of Thinking*,[21] where the integration of organic and technical thinking is developed. Organic thinking is holistic and inductive, while technical thinking is linear and deductive. To approach church renewal technically, one focuses on fixing or changing parts, such as programs and methodologies. To approach church renewal biotically, one focuses on the whole.

Christian Schwarz defends biotic thinking from two directions. First, he asserts that the church is primarily a living organism with biotic potential already endowed by God. We are to "follow the Biblical example of learning from the laws inherent in God's creation and applying them to life within the kingdom of God."[22] This is done primarily by analogy:

> Natural (or biotic) church development is an attempt to study nature, and thus God's creation, to discover principles that are applicable far beyond the realm of biology. This appeal to the biological world, the "largest and most successful

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[20] One of the frustrations of Schwarz's writings has been his choice of unfamiliar terms, such as automatism, technocrat, bipolar, and biotic. It requires a steep learning curve, and makes an initial presentation of NCD less palatable to the local church. ChurchSmart will be changing a few of these in future printings of Schwarz's books. The replacement term for "biotic principles" will be "growth forces."

[21] Schwarz, *Paradigm*, 220-221. See also Frederic Vester, *Neuland des Denkens: Vom technokratischen sum kybernetischen*, Fifth Edition (München: Zeitalter, 1988).

[22] Schwarz, *Natural Church Development*, 61.

organizational system we know," . . . involves the use of *analogy* as a method of perception . . . This analogy is not concentrated on the external appearances, rather it attempts to "press on to the underlying basic principles."[23]

The second direction from which he defends biotic thinking is wisdom: "Examining a phenomenon not in isolation, but rather in its complex interrelationships, and not forgetting the order that God, the creator, has revealed to us—that is the essence of the biblical concept of wisdom."[24] Schwarz points out that the wisdom writers of the Old Testament spoke to everyday life, not just the religious sphere, to reveal the hidden order within God's creation. It is a continuation of that wisdom to study the hidden dynamics that God planted within His creation. Such discovery can come to the unbeliever as well as the believer, and thus the resulting wisdom is likely to be found in many spheres throughout the world and throughout history. We should not reject the insights of non-Christians relevant to our cause, but should apply discernment so as to distinguish the insights from their questionable background. Wisdom will seek to apply all helpful insights that do not contradict Scripture.

Schwarz identifies these six biotic principles from the order which God the Creator has intended, and stresses their use in constructing a plan for addressing the minimum factor:

1. Interdependence. "The way the individual parts are integrated into a whole system is more important than the parts themselves. . . . If one acts upon any element, it simultaneously affects all other parts." Thus, we are "to view a phenomenon in the context of its manifold relationships rather than in isolation."[25]

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[23] Schwarz, *Paradigm*, 233.
[24] *Ibid*., 226.
[25] Schwarz, *Natural Church Development*, 66-67.

2. Multiplication. An organism does not keep getting bigger, but reproduces new organisms like itself. "Reproduction through multiplication is simply a life principle of all God-created organisms, including the church of Jesus Christ."[26]

3. Energy Transformation. Destructive energies can be turned to productive purposes. God takes intended evil and uses it for good, as is taught in Romans 8:28 and illustrated in the life of Joseph.

4. Multi-usage. Energy expended should be used for more than one purpose. This is exemplified by Jesus, who trained his disciples and ministered to people at the same time. His ministry to people was also discipleship training.

5. Symbiosis. Two dissimilar organisms can intimately live together in a mutually beneficial relationship. The church, for example, should "encourage the interplay of widely diverse gifts and personality types, all benefiting one another."[27]

6. Functionality. Every detail in God's creation has a specific function. We need to periodically examine our visible fruit to check the fulfillment of our function.

Contrast and Affinity

Natural Church Development is quite different from the models of church health we have examined to this point. The Revival Model, Spader, and Warren derive their principles from the teachings of Scripture. Schwarz has discovered the principles of NCD by studying churches, and then going to the Bible for verification. His contention that we can discern principles for the church within natural revelation begins to embrace not only scientific discoveries, but human wisdom as well.

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[26] *Ibid*., 68.
[27] *Ibid*., 74.

A caution must be given at this point. It is important for believers to know if they have begun to rely on the wisdom of this world, which is "foolishness in God's sight,"[28] to build the kingdom of God. Our weapons and methods are different than those of the world, possessing a "divine power to demolish strongholds."[29] The emphasis on natural qualities and biotic principles, while perhaps not in contradiction to God's Word, do not carry the same authority or power as truths derived from God's Word.

This contrast exposes a point of contention in the church since the days of Charles Finney. Many within the revival tradition thought in terms of the supernatural in church development, not the natural. When revival is sent by God through the Holy Spirit, people are changed and intense spiritual growth occurs. Unfortunately, it came to the point after several years of revival experience that some concluded that without revival there is little change, so it is best just to wait for the next revival. Charles Finney reacted strongly to this. In his first lecture in *Lectures on Revival*, Finney boldly states, "True Christianity is the work of humanity. It is something *we* do. It consists in obeying God. It is our duty. Granted, God induces us to do it, influencing us by His Spirit because of our great sinfulness and reluctance to obey."[30] He believed that it would be better for the church to have steady obedience, rather than the excitements of revival. Since that obedience is not present and will not be present, revivals are necessary. This is the way God has always worked.

Like Schwarz, Finney appeals to the world of nature:

There is nothing in true Christianity beyond the ordinary powers of nature. Revival consists entirely in the *right exercise* of the power of nature—just that and nothing

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[28] 1 Cor.3:19 NIV.

[29] 1 Cor.10:4 NIV.

[30] Charles G. Finney, *Lectures on Revival*, ed. Kevin Walter Johnson. (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1988), 11.

else. When people become obedient to God, they are not enabled to exert themselves in ways they weren't able to before. They only exert in a different way the powers they had before, using them now for the glory of God. . . .

In the Bible, the word of God is compared to grain; preaching to sowing seed; and the results to sprouting and growth of the crop. The results are just as logically connected with the cause in the one case as in the other. Or more correctly, a revival as naturally results from the use of the appointed means as a crop does form the use of its appointed means.[31]

Schwarz follows Finney, who, in clear contrast to the stricter Calvinists of that day and ours, believes that man can and should do those things which "give occasion"[32] for revival. Finney even uses analogy to bring this principle from nature to other realms beyond theology.[33] Schwarz differs from Finney, however, in that he actually discovers his biotic principles from within the realm of nature. A more complete study of this concern, and other concerns with Schwarz's theology, is found in Appendix 3.

The popularity of Natural Church Development comes from the practicality of the assessment tool and the implementation process. Though NCD International is publishing materials on each of the qualities, a church is free to use the authors and resources with which it is most comfortable to further understand and address the minimum factor. With coaching, NCD has proven to be effective in helping a church improve its overall church health.[34]

The eight essential qualities of NCD appear to be comprehensive, with six of them lining up well with the church models studied so far.   The adjective for each quality is the focus. "Empowering" leadership takes leadership multiplication a step

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[31] *Ibid*., 13-14.

[32] An important emphasis from that of cause and effect often lost by the critics of Finney, *Ibid*., 14.

[33] *Ibid*., 15.

[34] ChurchSmart, the resource for NCD implementation in the United States, has begun a training program for certifying coaches. This is the preferred approach for implementation. Their web site is www.churchsmart.com.

Figure 5-2
Comparison of the Revival Model, Growing a Healthy Church,
the Purpose-Driven Church, and Natural Church Development

Revival Model	Dann Spader *Sonlife/Growing a Healthy Church*	Rick Warren *Purpose-Driven Church*	Christian Schwartz *Natural Church Development*
1. Awakened believers humbly desire God's sovereign working			
2. High priority by leaders is given to revival			
3. Repentance, grace, and personal godliness are pursued openly			3. Passionate spirituality
4. Persistent prayer for revival is on-going	1. Prayer base	(Prayer acknowledged)	
5. The gospel and essential Bible doctrines are faithfully proclaimed	4. Right concept of Christ 6. The centrality of God's Word	(Gospel emphasized)	
6. Believers are discipled to seek, know, and serve God	7. Building events	5. Discipleship	6. Holistic small groups
7. Churches partner to bring revival to the community			
	2. Contacting, relational ministry		
	3. Loving relationships	4. Fellowship	8. Loving relationships
	5. Healthy biblical image		
	8. Equipping events	2. Ministry	2. Gift-oriented ministry
	9. Regular outreach events	3. Evangelism	7. Need-oriented evangelism
	10. Program balance		
	11. Leadership multiplication		1. Empowering leadership
	12. Clear vision		
		1. Worship	5. Inspiring worship services
			4. Functional structures

further. Ministry is now "gift-oriented," worship is to be "inspiring," small groups are to

be "holistic," and evangelism is to be "need-oriented." This clarifies for leaders the

qualities of the factors important in seeking church health.

The third quality, passionate spirituality, is not specifically identified by Spader or

Warren. They would not deny its importance, and might have included it under prayer

base or worship. Of the eight characteristics, passionate spirituality has the greatest

affinity to the Revival Model. Schwarz acknowledges that many seeking revival lift it

above the others as the most important quality.[35] The Revival Model would say this is

necessary.

"Enthusiasts" was the pejorative label handed down to those involved in the

revivals of Jonathan Edwards and the Great Awakening. Their passionate spirituality

because of their conversion experience was obvious in their behavior, often seen as

excessive to those who witnessed from a distance.   Edwards defended their

boisterousness by pointing to the solid "distinguishing marks" in their Christian faith, and

giving examples of those who had been profoundly blessed.[36]

Schwarz warns, however, of factors that block spiritual passion in the church.

While each has a positive origin, these eight passion killers have negative affects on the

church.[37] Three of them particularly touch on issues related to revival history:

puritanism, feelings of inferiority, and ecstasy dependency.

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[35] Schwarz, *Paradigm*, 260.

[36] Illustrative of such ecstatic experience is the account Edwards wrote of his wife, Sarah, in the chapter entitled "Heavenly Elysium'" in George M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life*. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003), 239-252.

[37] The eight are puritanism, animosity against institutions, righteousness by works, fatalism, feelings of inferiority, whimsical pleasure, magical expectations, and ecstasy dependency. Schwarz, *Implementation Guide*, 67.

Puritanism, as defined by Schwarz, is "a reaction against the 'I'll-do-it-if-I-like-it Christianity' with the motto: 'no images, no art, no cultural activities, no music, fast rather than feast.' Christians influenced by Puritan values view growth in faith as a process of becoming more and more aloof to 'external things.'"[38] It is unfortunate that the modern day caricature of the Puritans has stained both the world's and the church's appreciation of this passionately spiritual group, for Puritanism was the soil from which the First Great Awakening broke forth. Church historian Mark Noll identifies the convictions of Puritanism:

> Puritanism generally extended the thought of the English Reformation, with distinctive emphases on four convictions: (1) that personal salvation was entirely from God, (2) that the Bible provided the indispensable guide to life, (3) that the church should reflect the express teaching of Scripture, and (4) that society was one unified whole.[39]

While Noll identifies the fourth conviction, with its intolerance, as the reason for the damaged reputation of the Puritans today, Schwarz appears to contend against the exclusivity of the third. NCD is a scientific approach not limited to the prescriptions of the Bible. Thus, to look only to the Scriptures for an understanding of church health or passionate spirituality is too restrictive.

Feelings of inferiority, according to Schwarz, kill spiritual passion by "implicitly or expressly communicat[ing] this attitude: 'Whatever you do is an expression of sin.' This attitude makes it nearly impossible to ever enjoy the Christian faith."[40]

This stands in stark contrast to the teachings of Edwards and most other proponents of revival. For them, sin is the main problem that keeps one from enjoying

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[38] *Ibid.*

[39] Mark A. Noll, "Puritanism," In *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Mch.: Baker Book House, 1984), 898.

[40] Schwarz, *Implementation Guide*, 67.

the Christian faith. It is not to be ignored or explained away, but addressed through

repentance. Feelings of inferiority or self-worth were never an issue, for the focus was

on humility. Edwards wrote in his second most published work, *Advice to Young*

Converts, that the way of the kingdom is hard work:

> [We are] to remember that after conversion one has a "a thousand times" more
> reason "to lament and humble yourself for sins" but at the same time "don't be at
> all discouraged or disheartened by it; for though we are exceeding sinful, yet we
> have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, the preciousness of
> whose blood, and the merit of whose righteousness and the greatness of whose love
> and faithfulness does infinitely overtop the highest mountains of our sins."[41]

Rather than poor self worth, He warned of pride—"the worst viper that is in the heart, the

greatest disturber of the soul's peace and sweet communion."

Schwarz defines ecstasy dependency as the danger of "one extraordinary

experience which can only be surpassed by the next one" to the neglect of the "everyday

and down-to-earth principles" from which our passion should rise. His concern seems to

be not that the ecstatic experience occurs, but that we begin to need such experiences to

maintain our passion. Underlying this, however, might be Schwarz's antipathy for

revival expectancy, which to him belies a spiritualistic paradigm that paradoxically

"undermines the foundation on which revival can flourish."[42]

Certainly in the Great Awakenings, ecstasy dependency existed, and was often

seen as a problem. Critics of revivals, including many clergymen, had strong disdain for

enthusiasts and the whole revival experience. Revival leaders took to heart some of those

criticisms, and gave warning of their dangers.[43]

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[41] Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 225.
[42] Schwarz, *Paradigm Shift*, 38.
[43] Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 212.

It is important to note, however, that a consensus was building as revivals spread that it was in revival experience that accelerated Christian growth occurred and the world would eventually be won. Isaac Watts and John Guyse hailed the events in Edwards' region as a sign of "how easy it will be for our blessed Lord to make a full accomplishment of all his predictions concerning his kingdom, and to spread his dominion from sea to sea, through all the nations of the earth."[44] Later, Finney would agree, saying, "The work is still such—and probably will be until the millennium—that true Christianity must be promoted primarily through these awakenings."[45] Though spasmodic and even injurious to personal health, he believed that the powerful excitements of awakenings are the necessary means "to wake up the moral dormant powers and roll back the flood of sin," even in unconverted nations.

All concur that passionate spirituality is an essential quality of a healthy church, but those of the revival tradition would have to argue that NCD is too restrictive in its definition and far too minimizing in its placement of passionate spirituality in the overall scheme of church health.

Functional structures is the other quality that does not align with the church health models studied so far, including the Revival Model. Issues of organization, planning, oversight, and managing change are not major subjects of Scripture. They are supportive activities necessary for the primary tasks of the church to be accomplished. Thus, one can argue that they are not as important as inspiring worship, need-oriented evangelism, or passionate spirituality. Yet, it would be difficult to argue that it is not important.

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[44] *Ibid.*, 201-2.
[45] Finney, *Lectures*, 12.

Credit should be given here. Functional structures might never have been discovered as a church health quality if Schwarz had not preferred the scientific method.

When a church identifies functional structures as its minimum factor, the reasons can be quite varied:

> Often churches have to keep in mind a multitude of complex forms and regulations which may have been useful at the time they were instituted, but which lost their functionality over time. In other situations—as in the case of a new church planting project—this quality characteristic emerges as the minimum factor because there are simply not enough structures formed yet.[46]

Leaders in the church must take the responsibility for identifying the structures that enhance the mission of the church, and those that hinder it. Those that hinder it need to be changed or dropped, while those that enhance it need to be sharpened. New structures should be carefully added as needed.

With all eight of these qualities, a ring of validation can be heard. Passionate spirituality might be understated, and functional structures might be overstated. The others seem true to experience and to Scripture. That is probably why they are so readily owned by thousands of churches around the world, and Natural Church Development has become the standard among the models of church health.

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[46] Schwarz, *Implementation Guide*, 74.

CHAPTER 6

CHURCH HEALTH IN BALANCE:

STEPHEN MACCHIA AND BECOMING A HEALTHY CHURCH

A Damaged Spiritual Environment

Vision New England, formerly the Evangelistic Association of New England, has

become the largest regional association of churches in the United States, with over thirty

ministry initiatives serving over five thousand churches in eighty denominations.[1] Its

annual Congress brings thousands of pastors and church leaders together across

denominational lines to unite in evangelism, discipleship, and celebration. There has

been an impact as churches "advance the kingdom" in the part of the country that is

described as "a damaged spiritual environment if there ever was one."[2]

Stephen Macchia became the president of Vision New England in the late 1980s.

He and his team began to focus on the churches of New England.

> We asked ourselves what a truly healthy church looks like today. Is it one with
> strong preaching? A great choir? Lots of wealthy executives in the pews? An
> effective Sunday School program? A thriving missions program? As we studied
> what a healthy church looks like, we realized we had identified ten characteristics
> of a healthy church.[3]
>
> They initially researched one hundred churches to confirm these ten characteristics,
> and later did a survey of nearly 1900 attendees at a gender, denomination, age,
> number of years as a believer, responsibility in the church (pastor, ministry leader,
> or laity)—the basic rank order of the ten characteristics held constant.

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[1] Web site www.visionnewengland.org; Internet; accessed on 11/19/06.
[2] Haddon Robinson, in the preface of Stephen A. Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Church* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1999), 10.
[3] *Ibid.,* 14.

Demography, attitudes, behaviors, affiliations, and so forth did not appear to make a difference in how respondents rated these characteristics. They were ranked as follows:

Ten Charasteristics of a Healthy Church	Mean Score (nine-point scale)
1. God's Empowering Presence	8.78
2. God-Exalting Worship	8.43
3. Spiritual Disciplines	8.31
4. Learning and Growing in Community	8.21
5. A Commitment to Loving and Caring Relationships	8.19
6. Servant-Leader Development	8.02
7. An Outward Focus	7.90
8. Wise Administration and Accountability	7.56
9. Networking with the Body of Christ	7.03
10. Stewardship and Generosity	6.94

What began as a seminar with a workbook on church health was soon published in 1999 as a book, *Becoming a Healthy Church*, with several subsequent printings.[4] Among its many endorsements is this one on the front cover, "'A wonderful tool I recommend to every church serious about being purpose-driven'—Rick Warren."

Early in the first chapter, Macchia notes that Scripture and prayer were not given their own category, though they scored high in the survey (mean scores of 8.84 and 8.71 respectively).[5] Rather, the centrality of the Bible and prayer are in each of the ten characteristics. He comments:

> Strangely, though Scripture and prayer are highly valued, they are more often promoted than practiced. We not only need to reinvigorate our congregations toward greater biblical literacy, but we must reevaluate our traditional view of prayer meetings and introduce prayer into every context of the ministry.[6]

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[4] It could be argued that there are methodological weaknesses to Macchia's system. He does not begin with Scriptural principles nor scientific research, but rather a think tank approach. Furthermore, the findings are primarily tested within a single geographical area, New England.

[5] *Ibid.,* 18.

[6] *Ibid.*

Each of the chapters on the characteristics conclude with a prayer, and Bible references abound in the workbook.[7]

The Ten Characteristics

The following are summaries of the characteristics:

Characteristic 1. God's Empowering Presence: *The healthy church actively seeks the Holy Spirit's direction and empowerment for its daily life and ministry.*[8] One of the greatest sins of the Christian church today is an independent spirit. The idea that "we'll do it our way or no way, thank you very much" is one that has been fostered in America, but in the church has been channeled into self-centeredness and clinging to our own agendas. We must approach God with open, outstretched hands to receive from him the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit.[9] The fruit of the Spirit need to be lived out, and spiritual gifts need to be exercised in our ministries.

Characteristic 2. God Exalting Worship: *The healthy church gathers regularly as the local expression of the body of Christ to worship God in ways that engage the heart, mind, soul, and strength of the people.*[10] Macchia illustrates how churches must adjust to the shifting styles of worship in order to better engage Christians in the experience. Grace Church, in Lexington, Massachusetts, has four sub-congregations worshipping in three different styles, liturgical, traditional, and contemporary, from Saturday evening to Sunday evening. In contrast, Bethany Congregational Christian Church in Rye, New Hampshire, is seeking to blend a variety of worship styles into three

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[7] Stephen A. Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Church Workbook* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2001).

[8] Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Church*, 27.

[9] *Ibid.*, 31.

[10] *Ibid.*, 41.

identical weekend services.[11] By prayerfully seeking scriptural direction for their local church, the pastor and his team should be able to address the practical issues of leadership, style, and substance.[12]

Characteristic 3. Spiritual Disciplines: *"The healthy church provides training, models, and resources for members of all ages to develop their daily spiritual disciplines."*[13] Believers live in the tension of being and doing. "We cannot outweigh one over the other, or we will find ourselves in trouble in both the short and long term. Both sides of ourselves need to be fed and nurtured daily."[14] Mary chose what was better as she sat at Jesus' feet.[15] Through the discipline of quiet, we listen for, learn of and live out the heart of God.[16] This involves prayerfulness, study, and reflection.[17]

Characteristic 4. Learning and Growing in Community: *"The healthy church encourages believers to grow in their walks with God and with one another in the context of a safe, affirming environment."*[18] The example of Jesus as he built community with his disciples is to be followed by the church. Macchia stresses that though the hindrances in our day toward community are many, they must be overcome. This might require radical changes in programming, and doing away with that which is no longer relevant. He notes "seven big issues to address in assessing our zeal for expansion and maturity in Christ":

1. Care for our children, who are neglected "due to the overwhelming needs of today's dysfunctional adults."[19]

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[11] *Ibid.*, 48.
[12] Macchia lists several helpful elements and issues that should be considered in worship. *Ibid.*, 54.
[13] *Ibid.*, 59.
[14] *Ibid.*, 62.
[15] Luke 10:38-42.
[16] Macchia, *Ibid*., 69-79.
[17] *Ibid.*, 71-72.
[18] *Ibid.*, 77.
[19] *Ibid.*, 85.

2. Consistency of contact with "significant others" who reinforce Christian values.
3. Covenant groups, "with people we trust and can share our lives with through thick and thin."[20]
4. Curriculum for growth and learning, so that members have a clear sense of God's whole word.
5. Continual improvement of teachers.
6. Communication within in the family, taught and reinforced in the offerings of the church.
7. Community impact, the necessary outcome of all the church does.

Characteristic 5. A Commitment to Loving and Caring Relationships: *"The healthy church is intentional in its efforts to build loving, caring relationships within families, between members, and within the community they serve."*[21] Macchia states that seven directives are essential in building loving and caring relationships:

1. Express unconditional love and acceptance.
2. Encourage authenticity, transparency, honesty, integrity.
3. Exhibit grace, mercy, forgiveness.
4. Communicate and resolve conflicts.
5. Establish means for bearing each other's burdens.
6. Welcome diversity into your fellowship.
7. Equip families through intentional ministries.

Characteristic 6. Servant-leadership Development: *"The healthy church identifies and develops individuals whom God has called and given the gift of leadership and challenges them to become servant-leaders."*[22] Macchia defines leadership as:

1. a person
2. involved in a process
3. of influencing and developing a group of people
4. in order to accomplish a purpose
5. by means of supernatural power.[23]

He further challenges the leaders to be led, to love, to learn, to listen, to lighten the load of others, to lead, and to leave a legacy.

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[20] *Ibid.*, 87.
[21] *Ibid.*, 95.
[22] *Ibid.*, 115.
[23] *Ibid.*, 121.

Characteristic 7. An Outward Focus: *"The healthy church places high priority on communicating the truth of Jesus and demonstrating his love to those outside the faith."*[24] Evangelism should occur out of an overflow of joy, having found the grace and forgiveness of God, like David in Psalm 51. This is a work of the Holy Spirit, sharing the gospel in a preferred style with personal stories. Evangelism should be a corporate activity as the body of Christ. Macchia is strong to point out that this goes to the ends of the world as world missions.

Characteristic 8. Wise Administration and Accountability: *"The healthy church utilizes appropriate facilities, equipment, and systems to provide maximum support for the growth and development of its ministries."*[25] Whether through a senior pastor gifted in administration, or another prayerfully chosen to work with the senior pastor, wise administration is as important to the church as to the business community. The agenda should include strategic planning, goal setting, accountability, ongoing assessment and evaluation, and change management.[26]

Characteristic 9. Networking the Body of Christ: *"The healthy church reaches out to others in the body of Christ for collaboration, resource sharing, learning opportunities, and united celebrations of worship."* [27] Macchia details several worldwide, national and regional networks of pastors and churches to illustrate how God is working as the church unites. He then notes five principles to replicate:

1. Pastors as friends in prayer.
2. Resource sharing.

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[24] *Ibid.*, 135.
[25] *Ibid.*, 157.
[26] *Ibid.*, 159.
[27] *Ibid.*, 179.

3. Citywide Covenant.
4. United Outreach Efforts.
5. Regional Interdependence.

Characteristic 10. Stewardship and Generosity: *"The healthy church teaches its members that they are stewards of God-given resources and challenges them to sacrificial generosity in sharing with others."*[28] The issues in stewardship are more than financial. Macchia shows through the many teachings of Jesus on the subject and stirring stories of ministries in New England, that stewardship is a matter of the heart. Divine ownership, interdependent partnerships, and personal stewardship of life are taught in the Parable of the Talents. Pastors need to faithfully teach and model these truths on both the personal and church levels.

These ten characteristics, if faithfully pursued, are seen as a means to revival. He concludes with challenges to consider as requisites for renewal, including "to pray more than we have ever prayed in our lives" and "to repent and come clean of past and present sin so that who we are and what we are is a fragrant offering to the Lord."[29]

The accompanying *Workbook* guides the local church, particularly the pastor and leadership, through dialogue, assessment and planning on each of the ten characteristics. This is a process intended to take three to four months, and repeated periodically. The end result is identifying a dream for the future, and a plan on how to be living out each characteristic in the next year or two.

Balance and Emphasis

Spader and Warren discovered the way to church health through the exegesis of Scripture, and Schwarz found it through the scientific model. Macchia did both. He

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[28] *Ibid.*, 197.
[29] *Ibid.*, 220.

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began with discussions among his leadership, which initially identified the ten

characteristics. We do not know exactly how the discussions unfolded. It is safe to

assume they included observations from Scripture and experience. He tested the findings

over several years, including site visits to one hundred churches, and confirmed his

results with two major surveys.[30] His approach is a balance of biblical teaching and

church experience.

Rick Warren wrote an unsolicited email to Stephen Macchia, in which he said, "I

loved reading *Becoming a Healthy Church*. It's a wonderful tool that I recommend to

every church that is serious about becoming purpose-driven." In the same email, he

outlined how the Ten Characteristics of a Healthy Church fit perfectly into the purpose-

driven model:

> Worship (Magnification)
> - God's Empowering Presence (characteristic 1)
> - God-Exalting Worship (characteristic 2)
> Discipleship (Maturity)
> - Spiritual Disciplines (characteristic 3)
> - Learning and Growing in Community (characteristic 4)
> Fellowship (Membership)
> - A Commitment to Loving and Caring Relationships (characteristic 5)
> - Networking with the Body of Christ (characteristic 9)
> Service (Ministry)
> - Servant-Leadership Development (characteristic 6)
> - Wise Administration and Accountability (characteristic 8)
> Evangelism (Missions)
> - An Outward Focus (characteristic 7)
> - Stewardship and Generosity (characteristic 10)[31]

While a couple of these pairings might be a stretch, there certainly is much agreement

between Macchia and Warren. Macchia received this as an affirmation "that God was in

the midst of our work, and we return all the glory to him."[32]

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[30] *Ibid.*, 14.

[31] Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Church Workbook*, 14.

Figure 6-1
Comparison of the Revival Model, Growing a Healthy Church,
the Purpose-Driven Church, Natural Church Development,
and Becoming a Healthy Church

Revival Model	Dann Spader *Sonlife/Growing a Healthy Church*	Rick Warren *Purpose-Driven Church*	Christian Schwartz *Natural Church Development*	Stephen Maachia *Becoming a Healthy Church*
1. Awakened believers humbly desire God's sovereign working				1. God-empowering presence
2. High priority by leaders is given to revival				
3. Repentance, grace, and personal godliness are pursued openly			3. Passionate spirituality	3. Spiritual disciplines
4. Persistent prayer for revival is on-going	1. Prayer base	(Prayer acknowledged)		(Prayer through all)
5. The gospel and essential Bible doctrines are faithfully proclaimed	4. Right concept of Christ	(Gospel emphasized)		(Scripture through all)
	6. The centrality of God's Word			
6. Believers are discipled to seek, know, and serve God	7. Building events	5. Discipleship	6. Holistic small groups	4. Learning and growing in community
7. Churches partner to bring revival to the community				9. Networking with the body of Christ
	2. Contacting, relational ministry			
	3. Loving relationships	4. Fellowship	8. Loving relationships	5. A Commitment to loving and caring relatioships
	5. Healthy biblical image			
	8. Equipping events	2. Ministry	2. Gift-oriented ministry	6. Servant-leadership development
	11. Leadership multiplication		1. Empowering leadership	
	9. Regular outreach events	3. Evangelism	7. Need-oriented evangelism	7. An outward focus
	10. Program balance			
	12. Clear vision			
		1. Worship	5. Inspiring worship services	2. God-exalting worship
			4. Functional structures	8. Wise administration and accountability

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[32] *Ibid.*

				10. Stewardship and generosity

Furthermore, Becoming a Healthy Church covers all of the qualities of Natural Church Development. Granted, spiritual disciplines are only a part of passionate spirituality, and an outward focus is more general than need-oriented evangelism. However, servant-leadership development covers both gift-oriented ministry and empowering leadership. Wise administration and accountability amplifies functional structures with spiritual dimensions.

Unlike Schwarz, the terminology chosen and the explanations given by Macchia have a spiritual emphasis. He is not secular or natural, nor does he distance himself from groups within the church. His focus is on God as well as the church. He seems to own the spiritual heritage of the region he comes from—New England, with its rich history of revival. This, along with the work of the Holy Spirit, draws the reader to concur with his insights.

Of interest are the two characteristics he identifies that match only the Revival Model, and the one that stands alone.

Mentioned first, certainly because of its priority, is God's empowering presence. None of the other models would disagree with this. Warren includes it under worship and NCD mentions it under inspiring worship. Even so, Macchia raises it higher as the first of his ten characteristics of a healthy church. In the *Workbook*, he writes:

> In seeking to understand and implement God's will, the church:
> - articulates a clear understanding of who God is
> - teaches the "whole counsel of God" and relates it to the contemporary Christian church
> - emphasizes a supernatural-reliance instead of a self-reliance
> - creates enthusiasm about being a part of the kingdom of God

- prays for God's initiative and anticipates that God will act
- encourages its leaders to be change agents under God's guidance
- desires the fruit of the Spirit for all its members
- seeks the gifts of the Spirit within the body.[33]

He then gives ten passages from the gospels for church leaders to reflect on before

evaluating their church.[34] The opportunity is created to have "awakened believers

humbly desire God's sovereign working," as it is described in the Revival Model.

The ninth characteristic, networking with the body of Christ, is the other one that

only correlates with the Revival Model, where churches partner to bring revival to a

community. The obvious question is: Why was the matter of cooperation between

churches totally neglected by the other church health models? In answering this, it helps

to see how Macchia elaborates on this characteristic:

> Networking with the body of Christ includes such things as:
> - pastors within the same town meeting together to pray for and encourage each other
> - churches developing ministry specialties that meet the needs of their community without overlapping or competing with each other
> - ministry leaders receiving training for their specific ministry with other leaders throughout the region
> - area-wide celebrations where Christians join to worship God together and affirm their unity in Christ
> - the gatherings of the church in a variety of training and networking settings
> - sharing resources between churches
> - fostering interdependence across denominational boundaries
> - communicating with one another through the use of new and effective technologies, such as the internet.[35]

Through training and seminars, Spader, Warren, and Schwarz have been active in

encouraging one aspect of this networking. Their focus, however, is on the local church

rather than the church within a region—the church as God sees it. Pastors, too, are

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[33] *Ibid.,* 35.

[34] *Ibid.,* 36.

[35] *Ibid.*, 68.

focused on their own part of God's flock, not the larger flock that belongs to Him as well.

We even read scriptures addressed to a church, assuming that it was a single church for

the whole region that met in one place. Denominationalism, or even a spirit of

independence, can blind us from seeing how God chooses to work in his Kingdom, which

surpasses by far one church or one denomination. Can a church experience all that God

has for it to experience when it operates in isolation? Macchia is strong to say no.

> Does this sound too New Testament-like? Well, maybe we should reconsider whether we are called to be the First Church of Philippi or the whole church in Philippi. My vision is to see more pastors and ministry leaders claim a New Testament view of church ministry—dare I suggest a renewed "parish" mentality that goes beyond our immediate congregations and instead sees the entire community as one's parish? Most communities have a number of different churches, but we can still embrace all of like mind and heart.[36]

This is also a point of the Revival Model, realizing that God sends revival for all

of the church to experience, and it is to spread to the community. Those who saw it first

felt compelled to share it with their brethren nearby, and they invited the lost. Itinerant

preachers would go from community to community, sometimes preaching outside of the

church building because it was inadequate for all that came, or they were not welcome

inside. Union meetings became a blessed tradition. Evangelistic crusades required

multiple sponsoring churches and strong cooperation.

Historically, the church has understood it needs to be in a bless-able position, as

described in Psalm 133:

> How good and pleasant it is
>   when brothers live together in unity!
> It is like precious oil poured on the head,
>   running down on the beard,
> running down on Aaron's beard,
>   down upon the collar of his robes.
> It is as if the dew of Hermon

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[36] Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Church*, 22.

were falling on Mount Zion.
For there the LORD bestows his blessing,
even life forevermore.[37]

Here the church fulfills the Greatest Commandments, and is propelled into fulfilling the

Great Commission.

The final characteristic, which stands all alone among the church health models, is

stewardship and generosity. Macchia elaborates:

> The attitude of the leaders and members of the local church is a tangible
> expression of the attitude of Jesus, who taught that "from everyone who has been
> given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted
> with much, much more will be asked" (Luke 12:48) and "where your treasure is
> there your heart will be also" (Matt. 6:21), and is evident in their:
> - teaching on generosity and financial planning
> - sharing facilities and programs with others
> - giving a generous portion of the annual budget to local and international
>   missions
> - providing abundantly for those in need within the fellowship of believers,
>   including the unemployed, the widowed, and single parents
> - operating within the church's income, accounting for all contributions
> - operating in accordance with the principles of the Evangelical Council for
>   Financial Accountability or similar financial accountability group.[38]

While ranked the least of the ten by pastors, stewardship and generosity are still seen as

an important characteristic of a healthy church. A noted stewardship ministry argues,

"Since the subject of money, possessions, and management is addressed in the Bible

more than any other subject except the subject of love, it seems quite obvious that God

felt that financial stewardship training is very much an integral part of a well-rounded

spiritual education."[39]

The reasons why stewardship was not found in the other models might be the

same reasons pastors give for not including it in their own teachings. People complain

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[37] Psa. 133 NIV.

[38] Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Church Workbook*, 72.

[39] Crown Financial Ministries, Available at
http://www.crown.org/Library/ViewArticle.aspx?ArticleId=704; Internet; accessed November 30, 2006.

that the church is always asking for money, so the offering plates are replaced by a box in the foyer. Pastors themselves have not owned and practiced stewardship principles themselves. There even might be a theological bias that believes that generosity should happen only as God moves upon hearts, and not in response to any coercive teaching. Some believe it is a matter of Old Testament law that does not carry over to the New Testament church. Macchia is right to challenge these, noting that generosity and stewardship are indeed essential characteristics of a healthy church.

Stephen Macchia's *Becoming a Healthy Church* is the final church health model to be considered.   The five models are presented in chronological order. They begin with the Revival Model, gradually go to the models most adverse to revival, and conclude with the model most sympathetic to revival today. They are presented in chronological order, though it must be acknowledged that Spader, Warren, Schwarz, and Macchia are contemporaries. Another reason, however, for *Becoming a Healthy Church* to be at the end of the comparisons is that it appears to be the most complete of all the models, with a balance and emphasis most akin to Scripture.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION: REVIVAL AND CHURCH HEALTH

Common Issues

There are many models for church health today, but the ones we have explored

are the major players.[1] There is considerable overlap among them, as well as with the

Revival Model. The church health models typically own some of the Revival Model,

while adding other factors deemed necessary to present a fuller picture. The greatest

disparity appears to lie between the Revival Model and Natural Church Development, but

even there one can find room for consensus.

The comparison chart developed throughout this study has been intended to help

point out the similarities and differences of the models. It is an imperfect tool in that the

entries are from varying perspectives, and do not always line up perfectly. Subjective

judgments had to be made in order to see the bigger picture.

From this chart, however, it appears that there are seven common issues that the

five models put forth together:

1. Seeking God (shaded in yellow   ). Activities of believers in the church are

directed heavenward in faith. They are desirous to see God's promises fulfilled in their

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[1] See Appendix 1for a listing of other church health systems.

Figure 7-1
Seven Common Issues Among the Five Models

Revival Model	Dann Spader *Sonlife/Growing a Healthy Church*	Rick Warren *Purpose-Driven Church*	Christian Schwartz *Natural Church Development*	Stephen Maachia *Becoming a Healthy Church*
1. Awakened believers humbly desire God's sovereign working				1. God-empowering presence
2. High priority by leaders is given to revival				
3. Repentance, grace, and personal godliness are pursued openly			3. Passionate spirituality	3. Spiritual disciplines
4. Persistent prayer for revival is on-going	1. Prayer base	(Prayer acknowledged)		(Prayer through all)
5. The gospel and essential Bible doctrines are faithfully proclaimed	4. Right concept of Christ / 6. The centrality of God's Word	(Gospel emphasized)		(Scripture through all)
6. Believers are discipled to seek, know, and serve God	7. Building events	5. Discipleship	6. Holistic small groups	4. Learning and growing in community
7. Churches partner to bring revival to the community				9. Networking with the body of Christ
	2. Contacting, relational ministry			
	3. Loving relationships	4. Fellowship	8. Loving relationships	5. A Commitment to loving and caring relatioships
	5. Healthy Biblical image			
	8. Equipping events	2. Ministry	2. Gift-oriented ministry	6. Servant-leadership development
	11. Leadership multiplication		1. Empowering leadership	
	9. Regular outreach events	3. Evangelism	7. Need-oriented evangelism	7. An outward focus
	10. Program balance			
	12. Clear vision			
		1. Worship	5. Inspiring worship services	2. God-exalting worship
			4. Functional structures	8. Wise administration and accountability
				10. Stewardship and generosity

midst, including the promise of His awesome presence.[2] Corporate worship is both to

honor God and to draw closer to Him. As we draw closer, we are reminded of our sin

and repent. God cleanses us with the blood of Christ, and we proceed in His grace.[3] We

develop spiritual disciplines to know Him better. The greatest discipline is prayer, which

we must devote ourselves to in order to see the Kingdom come.[4]

2. Proclaiming the Word (red ▮). The Scriptures are held in high honor, and

central to the teachings and practices of the church. From them the church faithfully

proclaims Christ.[5] He is the core of our message. Furthermore, everything else the

church does is conditioned by the knowledge of, and obedience to, the Bible.[6]

3. Making Disciples (green ▮). New believers are to be taught how to seek

and serve God. Servants need to be equipped and employed according to their spiritual

gifts.[7] Leaders need to be trained and empowered. Community or small groups are well-

suited to making disciples as they provide a context for mutual ministry.

4. Winning the Lost (orange ▮). The church must reach those whom Christ

died for with the message of His love.[8] This might occur when the church gathers to

worship, or in events and ministries that it sponsors. The focus of the church must be

outward to the world.

5. Loving One Another (blue ▮). The proof that Christ has come into the

world is found in believers loving one another sincerely.[9] Biblical fellowship requires a

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[2] Jer. 29:13.
[3] 1 John 1:9, Rom. 5:20-21.
[4] Col. 4:2.
[5] 1 Cor. 1:21-23.
[6] 2 Tim. 3:16-17.
[7] Eph. 4:11-13, Rom. 12:6-8.
[8] 2 Cor. 5:14-15.
[9] John 13:34-35.

commitment to forgive and love all believers, and to work to keep the unity of the Spirit.[10]

6. Uniting the Body (lavender ▨). Unity must go beyond the local church to the church universal. A testimony is given to the world, and notice is given to the enemy.[11] God seeks to bless all of His people.

7. Leading the Organization (gray ▢). Ministries require organization. God has given the church leaders and administrators to properly structure and guide the church into the most fruitful places.[12]

Three entries in Figure 7-1 defied commonality, and were not included. "High priority given by leaders to revival" stood alone in the revival model as something only those who own that approach deemed relevant. Spader's "healthy Biblical image" seems secondary, resulting from others. "Stewardship and generosity" is undeniable, but not necessarily a health issue. It could be included in "making disciples."

<div align="center">What Revival Brings</div>

Since the revivals and awakenings from which we have identified the Revival Model precede the contemporary church health models in time, it is worthwhile to ask first what contribution revival uniquely offers to the church.

From the first column in the display, half of the common issues (in yellow) speak of seeking God. A brief reflection of some definitions of revival given in the second chapter shed more light:

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[10] Eph. 4:3.
[11] Phil. 1:27-28.
[12] Rom. 12:6-8.

"A true revival means nothing less than a revolution, casting out the spirit of worldliness and selfishness, and making God and His love triumph in the heart and life" (Andrew Murray).

"A community saturated with God" (Duncan Campbell).

"That strange and sovereign work of God in which He visits His own people, restoring, re-animating, and releasing them into the fullness of blessings" (Robert Coleman).[13]

"Revival is a renewal of spiritual vitality sent to the church as a gift from the sovereign and merciful God, and always producing in the believing community a deeper love of God, a more faithful obedience to the Word, and a more active concern for our neighbor" (Garth Rosell).[14]

To experience revival is to experience the presence of God in the person of the Holy Spirit. This experience is the most precious one that a believer can have, displacing the priority of anything else. As Moses was not satisfied with seeing anything less than the glory of God, so the believer who has seen revival is not content to pursue lesser ways. The seeker of revival is convinced that it is not by might, nor by power, but by God's Spirit[15] that God wants to work in the church. The reader must realize the unequaled passion behind these words. For indeed, one will not even find God unless one seeks Him wholeheartedly.[16]

Proclaiming the Word, making disciples, and seeking the lost are subsidiary to the priority of seeking God. Proclamation of the Word helps us to find God and know Him better. Discipleship is following Christ as Savior and Lord, and being equipped to serve Him. Evangelism is fulfilling Christ's Commission given to the Church to complete the task that He began. Even "uniting the body" is subservient to seeking God, for God

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[13] *An Urgent Appeal*, 18.
[14] Garth Rosell, class notes, January 14, 2004.
[15] Zech. 4:6.
[16] Jer. 29:13.

reveals blessing where we are one.[17] None of these can stand apart from nor above the priority of seeking God. Jesus warned the disciples of this in John 15 when he said, "Apart from me you can do nothing."[18]

What Church Health Brings

The church health models add significantly to the Revival Model.

"Loving one another" is brought forth as a major characteristic or task of the church. Those of the Revival Model would readily concur, except to say that this does not happen merely by training and obedience. It happens when the Holy Spirit brings revival. Such was the conclusion of Edwards when he saw his town of Northampton "full of the presence of God . . . full of love . . . full of joy." Similarly, Finney taught that revival was needed first "when there is a lack of brotherly love and confidence among those who profess to be Christians."[19] Church Health teaches that this is a matter of obedience to God's plan, whether revival comes or not. The church must teach, exhort and program to further loving relationships as a means to becoming healthy.

This change of emphasis might be due to the change in American society over the years. It was not too long ago that everyone knew everyone else in their community, and the church was made up of extended families who have known and lived with each other for generations. With the Industrial Revolution, migration to the cities, and the increasing mobility of our day, many people coming to church are seeking God in the midst of a loving community. They have few friends otherwise, and value the spiritual fellowship of brothers and sisters of like faith. Furthermore, in a world that has become

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[17] Ps. 133:1-3.
[18] John 15:5 NIV.
[19] Finney, *Lectures*, 20.

more complex, with secular hostility and moral corruption, believers are seeking a safe place where they can be encouraged and kept accountable. The biblical imperative to love one another[20] is being raised to its rightful place.

On three issues, church health adds to what revival has already raised. Seeking God is expanded by including worship. While personal worship that one has in their devotional lives was inherent in one's daily walk, corporate worship under revival was rarely addressed. That might be because there was a prescribed liturgy for most of the church, and the challenge was to go through it with your heart as well as your mind. Today, the secularity of our culture has brought us to the point where the many young people find church music foreign. The increasing influence of new media has forced the church to communicate more effectively to those accustomed to sound bytes and video energy. They are not willing to withstand long sermons devoid of story-telling or personal illustrations. Corporate worship style has become a battleground between contemporary and traditional, leaving pastors and church leaders confused as to how to be relevant, inspirational, and biblical.

To "making disciples," church health adds equipping servants and leadership development. After discipling new believers, leaders of the Revival Model likely modeled servanthood and leadership without a specific plan. If someone showed leadership gifts, they would be encouraged to go to seminary. Today, there is a strong movement to restore ministry to the laity, which is quite biblical. Pastors and teachers are among those who are to prepare God's people for works of service.[21] The higher level of education and training in our congregations today brings with it a sense of

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[20] John 13:34-35.
[21] Eph. 4:11-13.

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responsibility. Leaders in companies are willing to lead in church. Managers are willing to manage, and teachers are willing to teach. With the insights of knowing one's spiritual gift, leaders might like to teach in the church, managers might be better at evangelism, and teachers might be glad to simply serve. The mobilization of the laity is essential for the church.

On the issue of "reaching the lost," church health takes evangelism beyond the walls and into the community. It is not that this was not happening in the Revival Model, but the typical approach was to go out to the community and bring them in to hear the gospel message. Even in the open fields, the focus was getting people to where the gospel was preached. Today, there is adversity on the part of many to ever enter the doors of a church or attend an evangelistic crusade. Church health tells the church it must find new ways to earn the right to be heard. Community involvement and need-oriented evangelism bring a witness that accompanies the social gospel, opening doors for the proclamation of Jesus Christ as savior.[22] Feeding the hungry, ministering to children of broken homes, helping the addicted to recovery, and tutoring after school enable the church to get beyond its walls to address some of the needs of those around with the love of Christ. Some are so impressed that they ask a reason of the hope we have.[23]

A final contribution of church health is one totally neglected by the Revival Model: Leading the organization. Today's business community has learned important principles of leadership and management required to win in a competitive world. Often

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[22] The Bible basis of the social gospel comes from several passages, especially Matt. 25:31-46, where the king rewards the sheep over the goats for feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, welcoming strangers, clothing the naked, caring for the sick, and visiting those in prison. See also James 1:27, 2:14-17.

[23] 1 Pet. 3:15.

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these amplify or supplement biblical principles. As churches grow larger, many into thousands of members, sustaining ministry requires business savvy. As they administer staff, properties, and large sums of money, churches are expected to be as methodical and accountable as any corporation by its members, the public at large, and the government. The Bible does not address these matters in detail, so we must learn from the business world as well.

While all of these common issues are important, it is worthy to note that church health does not bring to the church anything as vital as the first issue, seeking God. All are secondary or subsidiary to the priority that God gave in the greatest commandment: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."[24]

This raises a fundamental point.

What We Seek

We must not forget that, in all the minutia of this study, the goal of both revival and church health is to see Christ's church be all that God intended it to be. To communicate this, God chose to use metaphors. The church is a building, the temple of God, made with living stones that He will indwell.[25] It is a body, of which Christ is the head and believers are members.[26] It is a family with a Firstborn, and brothers and sisters brought in by adoption.[27] It's also a promised Bride, being prepared for a great wedding, where she will be presented to Jesus Christ, the groom, as spotless. Truly, this is still a

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[24] Matt. 22:37 NIV.
[25] 1 Cor. 3:9, 1 Pet. 2:4-5.
[26] 1 Cor.12:12, Col.1:24.
[27] Rom. 8:15-17.

mystery, though revealed it is not fully understood.[28] The church is much more than we

can see from our position on earth, as the author of Hebrews points out:

> But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.[29]

In the midst of the heavenly Jerusalem, the church stands before the throne of God with

the assembly of angels. This is what God intends the church to be.

In our study, we have well identified the tasks of the church. However, there

appears to be another dimension not brought up by any of the models. Paul wrote of it in

the book of Ephesians:

> His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. [30]

God has an agenda for the church on another plane, where spiritual rulers and authorities

will be instructed in the manifold wisdom of God and give Him the full glory due His

name.[31] Somehow this is to be accomplished in today's church as we also preach "the

unsearchable riches of Christ" and "make plain to everyone the administration of this

mystery."[32] This also is what we must seek.

Is the revival model sufficient to bring the church to be all that God intends it to

be? No, but it offers a strong foundation. The priority of seeking God and depending

fully on the Holy Spirit is essential. Prayer and the Word are indispensable. More is

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[28] Eph. 5:32.
[29] Heb. 12:22-24 NIV.
[30] Eph. 3:10-11 NIV.
[31] Eph. 2:9-11.
[32] Eph 3:8-9.

needed, however, to sustain that revival and to solidify the church in a pattern of faithfulness and fruitfulness when it doesn't appear that God is sending revival.

Is church health sufficient to bring the church to be all that God intends it to be? No. It addresses some of the weaknesses of the Revival Model. It identifies what the church must be doing whether revival is present or not. Church health is an advance on the Revival Model, but not a full replacement.

In order for the church to become all that God intends it to be, we should seek both the priority and passion of the Revival Model and the qualities and characteristics of the church health models.[33] They need not be seen as oppositional.[34] None of the issues are in contention. They agree with and complement each other. And, in the power of the Spirit of God, they are the best tools we have for becoming what God wants us to be.

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[33] Of the church health models examined, Macchia is the closest to the Revival Model.

[34] Schwarz appears to be the most oppositional to the Revival Model, though his objections might be more with its excesses. See Appendix 3 for details on his objections.

APPENDIX 1

OTHER AUTHORS ON CHURCH HEALTH

As church health becomes the preferred approach to helping churches realize their

God-given potential, there is an increasing diversity of books and materials being

published. Some allude to church health, while others make it their focus.

The following is a survey of the contributions of other notable authors to the field

of church health. They are presented in alphabetical order.

George Barna

George Barna is the founder and president of Barna Research Group, Ltd., and the

author of several books based on his research intended to address current issues within

Christianity and the church. In 1993, he published *Turnaround Churches: How to*

Overcome Barriers to Growth and Bring New Life to an Established Church.[1] Based on

a study of thirty churches "that at one time had been thriving congregations, then

experienced a steep decline but ultimately pulled out of the dive and became

revitalized."[2] Eleven factors were discovered to be present when a dying church was

restored to wholeness. Barna comments:

> Naturally, the key to spiritual revival of any kind is the presence of the Holy Spirit
> and the openness of the people to the working of God's Spirit. Apart from this

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[1] George Barna, *Turnaround Churches: How to Overcome Barriers to Growth and Bring New Life to an Established Church* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1993).

[2] *Ibid.*, 17.

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condition, all efforts to influence people's thinking and behavior through ministry techniques will fail.[3]

After stating the first factor, "the desire to please God through obedience to a special calling to ministry,"[4] Barna lists the rest through five categories of activity:

1. Relational integrity: The pastor must establish a bond of trust with his congregation, and must radically love his people.

2. Strategic initiatives: A new pastor must be brought in, the past must be released, the types of outreach the church will emphasize must be defined, and the laity must be equipped for effective, targeted ministry.

3. Pastoral character: The pastor must be a strong leader who is hard working.

4. Spiritual practices: There should be wide-spread and heartfelt prayer, and the sermons should be "a cut or two better than what the congregation had received in the past."[5]

5. Resource base: The church needs to gain an objective outsider's perspective. It should seek to have great staff members and a committed core of zealots.

Also worthy of note on the subject of church health in *Turnaround Churches* is the list of twenty suggestions to avoid a downward spiral.[6]

Another book by Barna, *The Habits of Highly Effective Churches*,[7] identifies "nine habits that matter." He writes: "My recent research has discovered that there are nine habits possessed by all highly effective churches. Those habits are put into practice

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[3] *Ibid.*, 42.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*, 53.
[6] *Ibid.*, 100-106.
[7] George Barna, *The Habits of Highly Effective Churches* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1999).

in different ways, but the essence of those habits is the same across all highly effective

churches."[8] The nine habits are:

1. Rely upon strategic leadership.

2. Organize to facilitate highly effective ministry.

3. Emphasize developing significant relationships within the congregations.

4. Congregants invest themselves in genuine worship.

5. Engage in strategic evangelism.

6. Get people involved in systematic theological growth.

7. Utilize holistic stewardship practices.

8. Serve the needy people in the community.

9. Equip families to minister to themselves.[9]

These nine line up well with the church health models we have studied.

Mark Dever

Mark Dever is the Senior pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington,

D.C. and a visiting professor at both Beeson Divinity School and Southern Baptist

Theological Seminary. He published *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* first as a tract in

1997, then as a book in 2000.[10] He is executive director of 9Marks, which exists to "help

local church pastors and leaders in the discovery and application of the biblical priorities

that cultivate health and holiness in the local church."[11] Unlike Barna, Dever's findings

are highly theological as they are derived from biblical exposition. He sees most other

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[8] *Ibid.*, 24.

[9] *Ibid*.

[10] Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2000).

[11] Mark Dever, Available from
http://www.9marks.org/CC_Content_Page/0,,PTID314526%7CCHID616022%7CCIID,00.html; Internet;
accessed November 30, 2006.

approaches to church health as inviting compromise, where the church eventually reflects

the surrounding culture rather than shaping it.

The web site for 9Marks presents the Nine Marks succinctly:

We believe the local church is the focal point of God's plan for displaying his glory to the nations. Our vision is simple: Churches that reflect the character of God. Our mission is to cultivate and encourage churches characterized by these nine marks:

1. Expositional Preaching. This is preaching which expounds what Scripture says in a particular passage, carefully explaining its meaning and applying it to the congregation. It is a commitment to hearing God's Word and to recovering the centrality of it in our worship.

2. Biblical Theology. Paul charges Titus to "teach what is in accord with sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1). Our concern should be not only with how we are taught, but with what we are taught. Biblical theology is a commitment to know the God of the Bible as He has revealed Himself in Scripture.

3. Biblical Understanding of the Good News. The gospel is the heart of Christianity. But the good news is not that God wants to meet people's felt needs or help them develop a healthier self-image. We have sinfully rebelled against our Creator and Judge. Yet He has graciously sent His Son to die the death we deserved for our sin, and He has credited Christ's acquittal to those who repent of their sins and believe in Jesus' death and resurrection. *That* is the good news.

4. Biblical Understanding of Conversion. The spiritual change each person needs is so radical, so near the root of us, that only God can do it. We need God to convert us. Conversion need not be an emotionally heated experience, but it must evidence itself in godly fruit if it is to be what the Bible regards as a true conversion.

5. Biblical Understanding of Evangelism. How someone shares the gospel is closely related to how he understands the gospel. To present it as an additive that gives non-Christians something they naturally want (i.e. joy or peace) is to present a half-truth, which elicits false conversions. The whole truth is that our deepest need is spiritual life, and that new life only comes by repenting of our sins and believing in Jesus. We present the gospel openly, and leave the converting to God.

6. Biblical Understanding of Membership. Membership should reflect a living commitment to a local church in attendance, giving, prayer and service; otherwise it is meaningless, worthless, and even dangerous. We should not allow people to keep their membership in our churches for sentimental reasons or lack of attention. To be a member is knowingly to be traveling together as aliens and strangers in this

world as we head to our heavenly home.

7. Biblical Church Discipline. Church discipline gives parameters to church membership. The idea seems negative to people today – "didn't our Lord forbid judging?" But if we cannot say how a Christian should *not* live, how can we say how he or she *should* live? Each local church actually has a biblical responsibility to judge the life and teaching of its leaders, and even of its members, particularly insofar as either could compromise the church's witness to the gospel.

8. Promotion of Christian Discipleship and Growth. A pervasive concern with church growth exists today – not simply with growing numbers, but with growing members. Though many Christians measure other things, the only certain observable sign of growth is a life of increasing holiness, rooted in Christian self-denial. These concepts are nearly extinct in the modern church. Recovering true discipleship for today would build the church and promote a clearer witness to the world.

9. Biblical Understanding of Leadership. What eighteenth-century Baptists and Presbyterians often agreed upon was that there should be a plurality of elders in each local church. This plurality of elders is not only biblical, but practical — it has the immense benefit of rounding out the pastor's gifts to ensure the proper shepherding of God's church.

 In identifying and promoting these nine marks, we are not intending to lay down an exhaustive or authoritative list. There are other significant marks of healthy churches, like prayer and fellowship. We want to pursue those ourselves as well, and we want you to pursue them with us. But these nine are the ones we think are most neglected in most local churches today, with the most damaging ramifications. Join us in cultivating churches that reflect the character of God.[12]

The book has an appendix entitled "The Numerical Nineties."[13] This is a

gleaning of the church growth and church health systems of many recent authors, similar

to the lists in this paper, but without comment or comparison.

Donald J. MacNair

Donald McNair has been a church planter, a pastor, a consultant, the Executive

Director of National Presbyterian Missions, and an adjunct professor of Practical

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[12] Mark Dever, Available from http://www.9marks.org/CC_Content_Page/0,,PTID314526%7CCHID616736%7CCIID,00.html; Internet; accessed November 30, 2006.
[13] Mark Dever, *The Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, 234-242.

Theology at Covenant Theological Seminary. In his book, *The Practice of a Healthy Church*,[14] he identifies six healthy practices:

1. The church must retain its commitment to the Holy Scriptures without compromise.

2. The church must engage in regular, vibrant worship to God as the ultimate motivation for personal and corporate growth.

3. The church must continually train and implement shepherd leadership.

4. The church must have a mechanism for utilizing gifted member initiative with ordained elder accountability.

5. The church must have a continually modified vision and plan, unique to the church body at that time and in that community, which focuses and implements its purpose and mission.

6. The church must prayerfully seek the grace of God to build commitment to biblical health.[15]

As these practices are largely covered in the authors we have studied, the value of this book lies in how he deals with them in detail.

<center>Thom S. Rainer</center>

Until recently becoming executive director of Lifeway Christian Resources, Thom Rainer has been a leader in the area of church growth and church health. As the president of Church Central, he formalized the six purposes of a healthy church from Acts 2:42-47: Worship, Fellowship, Ministry, Discipleship, Prayer, and Evangelism.[16] A church health survey and other materials based on these purposes is available on the internet.

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[14] Donald J. MacNair, with Esther L Meek, *The Practices of a Healthy Church: Biblical Strategies for Vibrant Church Life and Ministry* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 1999).

[15] Ibid., 51, 79, 119, 171, 231.

[16] Church Central, Available from http://www.churchcentral.com/nw/s/template/ChurchHealthSurvey.html; Internet; accessed November 30, 2006.

Rainer has also written several books, of which *Breakout Churches: Discover How to Make the Leap*[17] might be the most relevant to church health. Inspired by the research of Jim Collins in the book *Good to Great*[18] Rainer conducted a study of churches that had sustained a significant period of growth after a time of decline or being plateaued while under the same pastoral leadership. The study revealed six major components of the chrysalis factor as churches broke-out to growth and fruitful ministry.

Acts 6/7 Legacy Leadership. The leadership qualities of the Twelve in Acts 6 and Stephen in Acts 7 are typical of the pastors of breakout churches.

The ABC Moment. Awareness, belief, and crisis causes the leaders to take action to bridge the gap from "what is" to "what should be."[19]

The Who/What Simultrack. Leaders asked what the purpose of the church was. Many found great help in Rick Warren's *Purpose-Driven Church*. Then they sought to get the right people on board.

The VIP Factor. "The researchers found out that the leaders discovered vision through intersection of three factors: the passion of the leader; the needs of the community; and the gifts, abilities, talents, and passions of the congregation."[20]

Culture of Excellence. Once the earlier factors are established, the leaders kept the direction strong by seeking excellence in all that they did.

Innovation Accelerators. Innovations are brought on carefully, as the growth of the church demanded.

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[17] Thom S. Rainer, *Breakout Churches: Discover How to Make the Leap* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2005).

[18] Jim Collins, *Good to Great* (New York: HarperBusiness, 2001).

[19] Rainer, *Ibid.*, 29.

[20] *Ibid.*, 30.

Acts 6/7 Leadership	• Develop core biblical values. • Pray for a Christlike spirit in all areas. • Decide in God's power to love the people of the church no matter what. • Seek to lead your church to an outward focus, beyond the walls of the congregation. • In God's will make a commitment to stay with the church long-term.
The ABC Moment	• Seek outside counsel to help you see the church from an outsider's perspective. • Be a lifelong learner through numerous media. • Pray for your critics and maintain an attitude of love toward them. • Be prepared for the reality that most crises will be the result of conflict with Christians. • Pray that God will allow you to see beyond the crisis and see his work in the difficult moments.
Who/What Simultrack	• Deal quickly but compassionately with major people problems. • Develop a high-expectation culture in the church that will attract more of the right people. • Work on major structural needs in the church while simultaneously working on people issues.
The VIP Factor	• Discern your passions for ministry as a leader. • Discover the gifts and passions of the members of your congregation. • Discover the needs in the community. • See where the above three factors intersect, and focus many resources at this vision intersection.
Culture of Excellence	• Attempt to do all things with excellence in God's power. • If the church cannot do something with excellence, consider discarding or discontinuing the effort. • See innovation as a means, not as an end. • Carefully evaluate each innovative opportunity; be open but cautious with innovations.
Big Mo	• Learn that each success God gives is often a beginning point for another opportunity for success.

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[21] *Ibid.*, 200.

A chart at the conclusion of the book, titled "Some Steps Toward Breaking Out," is reproduced here to give a greater feel for the breakout approach. It is worthwhile to note how it validates much of what we have seen in other church health models.

Harry L. Reeder, III

The book by Harry Reeder, *From Embers to a Flame*,[22] is based on the convictions born in the experiences of church revitalization. His pastoral ministry has been in the successful revitalization of churches that had dwindled to less than one hundred in worship. Now, while pastor of Briarwood Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama, Reeder also conducts seminars on nurturing church vitality.

Reeder identifies the biblical paradigm for church revitalization from the letter written to the church in Ephesus in Revelation 2:1-7. That church had forsaken its first love, and was instructed to remember, repent, and recover. That which is to be re-covered are the "first things." Reeder expounds on six first things from Scripture and experience. These form the titles of the chapters in his book:

1. The Gospel of God's Grace.

2. The Role of Prayer.

3. The Ministry of the Word.

4. Leadership Multiplication.

5. Mission and Vision.

6. Great Commission Discipleship.

It is interesting to note the significant overlap with the other models of church health we have studied.

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[22] Harry L. Reeder III and David Swavely, *From Embers to a Flame* (Phillipsburg, N. J.: P & R Publishing Company, 2004.

Gene Wood

Gene Wood has been pastor of four successful turnaround churches. From this

experience, he has written two books that speak to the lessons of leadership he has

learned. His first book, *Leading Turnaround Churches*,[23] offers ten characteristics of

turnaround leaders. Turnaround leaders:

1. consider leadership an act of service.

2. accept responsibility for the turnaround.

3. avoid a church which does not desire to be healthy.

4. establish the critical rules of engagement before they arrive.

5. never backtrack.

6. keep close reign on their tempers.

7. are discreet about what they share with others.

8. are willing to confront the sin of divisiveness.

9. possess "growth vision."

10. are action-oriented and bold.[24]

Wood's second book, *Leading Turnaround Teams*,[25] was written with Daniel

Harkavy, founder-owner of Building Champions, which offers professional coaching for

the business community. Harkavy has founded a not-for-profit counterpart called

Ministry Coaching International. The thesis of this book is "Turnaround begins with

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[23] Gene Wood, *Leading Turnaround Churches* (St. Charles, Ill.: ChurchSmart Resources, 2001).
[24] *Ibid.*, 87-150.
[25] Gene Wood and Daniel Harkavy, *Leading Turnaround Teams* (St. Charles, Ill.: ChurchSmart Resources, 2004).

leadership but will be implemented only through effective teamwork."[26] They offer

seven "C-crets" of team building in the non-profit sector: convictions, courage,

commitment, competency, choices, changes, and characteristics.

Because Wood focuses on leadership in church renewal rather than qualities

within a church, his emphases do not compare easily with the other authors. His work

serves as a bridge to the subject of pastoral leadership, which is certainly relevant to

church health, though not within the scope of this work.

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[26] *Ibid.*, 9.

APPENDIX 2

CONCERNS REGARDING RICK WARREN ON REPENTANCE

Is the gospel preached by Edwards, Finney, and others the same gospel that Rick

Warren preaches?

In his best-selling book, *The Purpose-Driven Life*, Rick Warren presents the

gospel in simple terms:

> Right now, God is inviting you to live for his glory by fulfilling the purposes he
> made for you. It's really the only way to live. Everything else is just existing.
> Real life begins by committing yourself completely to Jesus Christ. If you are not
> sure you have done this, all you need to do is *receive* and *believe*. The Bible
> promises, *"To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the
> right to become children of God."* . . . Will you accept God's offer?
>
> First, believe. Believe God loves you and made you for his purposes. Believe
> you're not an accident. Believe you were made to last forever. Believe God had
> chosen you to have a relationship with Jesus, who died on the cross for you.
> Believe that no matter what you've done, God wants to forgive you.
>
> Second, receive. Receive Jesus into your life as your Lord and Savior. Receive his
> forgiveness for your sins. Receive his Spirit, who will give you the power to fulfill
> your life purpose. The Bible says, *"Whoever accepts and trusts the Son gets in on
> everything, life complete and forever!"* . . . Wherever you are reading this, I invite
> you to bow your head and quietly whisper the prayer that will change your eternity:
> *"Jesus, I believe in you and receive you."* Go ahead.
>
> If you sincerely meant that prayer, congratulations! Welcome to the family of
> God![1]

The sum total of the teaching on sin, repentance, and the meaning of the cross in this

gospel presentation is the supportive clause "who died on the cross for you," referring to

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[1] Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Life*, 58-9.

Jesus, and the second in a series of three explanatory statements of what you receive,

"Receive his forgiveness for your sins."[2]

Further on, on Day 14 in *The Purpose-Driven Life*, under the heading "When God

Seems Distant," Warren says more:

> **Remember what God has already done for you.** If God never did anything else for you, he would still deserve your continual praise for the rest of your life because of what Jesus did for you on the cross. *God's Son died for you!* This is the greatest reason for worship.
>
> Unfortunately, we forget the cruel details of the agonizing sacrifice God made on our behalf. Familiarity breeds complacency. Even before his crucifixion, the son of God was stripped naked, beaten until almost unrecognizable, whipped, scorned and mocked, crowned with thorns, and spit on contemptuously. Abused and ridiculed by heartless men, he was treated worse than an animal.
>
> Then, nearly unconscious from blood loss, he was forced to drag a cumbersome cross up a hill, was nailed to it, and was left to die the slow, excruciating torture of death by crucifixion. While his lifeblood drained out, hecklers stood by and shouted insults, making fun of his pain and challenging his claim to be God.
>
> Next, as Jesus took all of mankind's sin and guilt on himself, God looked away from that ugly sight, and Jesus cried out in total desperation, "My God, my God, why have *you* forsaken me?" Jesus could have saved himself—but then he could not have saved you.
>
> Words cannot describe the darkness of that moment. Why did God allow and endure such ghastly, evil mistreatment? Why? So you could be spared from eternity in hell, and so you could share in his glory forever! The Bible says, *"Christ was without sin, but for our sake God made him share our sin in order that in union with him we might share the righteousness of God."*…
>
> Jesus gave up everything so you could have everything. He died so you could live forever. That alone is worthy of your continual thanks and praise. Never again should you wonder what you have to be thankful for.[3]

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[2] There are two other matters of major concern in Warren's gospel that deserve treatment in another place: 1) he uses many Bible versions and paraphrases, sometimes inaccurately, and 2) his emphasis on self-fulfillment over self-denial (see Luke 14:26), as seen in the quote above and much of the *Purpose-Driven Life*. On the second, the appeal for the gospel is to choose to live for God rather than yourself, without ever addressing the sinfulness of living for oneself. For a treatment on self-love, see: Jonathan Edwards, *The Nature of True Virtue*, Chapter IV, available at http://www.jonathanedwards.com/text/2D/True%20Virtue.htm; Internet; accessed June 1, 2006.

[3] Warren, *Ibid*., 112-3.

Certainly, Warren cannot be criticized by the evangelical community for his failure to preach the cross of Christ. The question narrows down to confession of sin on the part of the seeker or believer and the role of repentance. His next chapter addresses believer's baptism, and even tells of the 3000 at Pentecost, but omits Peter's instruction, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, so that your sins may be forgiven . . . "[4]

In the context of Purpose #2, "You were formed for God's family," Warren addresses the matter of forgiving one another and mentions, " . . . the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others."[5] Excellent instruction is given on how to restore fellowship with others, even explaining how confession is a powerful tool. But no linkage is made as to how to confess one's sins to the Lord.[6] This is a wonderful teaching on reconciliation between one another, that could have easily, with biblical precedent, have referenced the godly sorrow that leaves no remorse that we are to have before God in reconciliation.

In all of his practical instruction on worship, temptation, fellowship with God and Christ-likeness, there is no instruction on restoration, not even a mention of 1 John 1.9.[7] This is not oversight. It is in line with Warren's theology of conversion.

On day 23 of the 40 Days of Purpose, repentance is finally addressed under the heading of "How We Grow." Warren writes, "To be like Christ, you must develop the mind of Christ. The New Testament calls this mental shift *repentance*, which in Greek literally means "To change your mind." You repent whenever you change the way you think by adopting how God thinks—about yourself, sin, God, other people, life, your

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[4] *Ibid*., 121, and Acts 2:38 NIV.
[5] *Ibid*., 143.
[6] *Ibid*., 156-7.
[7] 1 John 1:9 NIV: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

future, and everything else. You take on Christ's outlook and perspective."[8] This seems

a rather sterile definition of repentance, reflecting perhaps its original Greek meaning but

not the deeper biblical teaching where you are to rend your heart, not your garment.[9]

Warren is clear about the nature of sin when he says, "But a little sin is like being

a little pregnant. It will eventually show itself."[10]. He gives solid instruction on how to

overcome temptation and how to defeat temptation, but is silent on what to do if you have

fallen into temptation. He quotes James 4:7 clearly, but does not venture into

James 4:8-10.[11]

On the related topic of humility, Warren writes: "Humility is not putting yourself

down or denying your strengths; rather, it is being honest about weaknesses. The more

honest you are, the more of God's grace you get. You will also receive grace from

others. Vulnerability is an endearing quality; we are naturally drawn to humble

people."[12] This is in the chapter on "Serving God in Your Weakness" and is not directly

addressing the issues of repentance and reconciliation. However, is "being honest about

your weaknesses" a fair encapsulation of the biblical concept of humility? Humility

begins at the cross, where we realize that apart from Christ, we can do nothing.[13]

Insight into Warren's gospel is found in the methodology he follows at

Saddleback Community Church, where the weekend worship services are filled with both

the "congregation" (membership) and the "crowd" (uncommitted attenders), the latter

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[8] Warren, *Ibid*., 182.

[9] Joel 2:13.

[10] *Ibid*., 204.

[11] James 4:7 (NIV): "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." James 4:8-10 (NIV): "Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up."

[12] Warren, *Ibid*., 276-7.

[13] John 15:6.

having "questionable lifestyles, sinful habits, and even notorious reputations."[14] As

sanctification comes after salvation, the issues of sin are primarily dealt with after one

comes to Christ.[15] Warren writes, "Jesus did not say, 'Clean up your act and then I'll

save you.' He loved you even before you changed. And he expects you to do the same

with other people. I can't count the large number of couples who started attending

Saddleback while living together and, once they were saved, asked to be married."[16]

For Warren, people come to Christ because of their need, and afterward they deal

with the issues of sin in the process of sanctification. He defends this:

> Today, "preaching to felt needs" is scorned and criticized as a cheapening of the
> Gospel and a sellout to consumerism. I want to state this in the clearest way
> possible: Beginning a message with people's felt needs is more than a marketing
> tool! It is based on the theological fact that God chooses to reveal himself to man
> according to *our* needs! Both the Old and New Testaments are filled with
> examples of this.
>
> Even the names of God are revelations of how God meets our felt needs!
> Throughout history when people have asked God, "What is your name?" God's
> response has been to reveal himself according to what they needed at that time: To
> those who needed a miracle, God revealed himself as Jehovah Jireh (I am your
> provider); to those who needed comfort, God revealed himself as Jehovah Shalom
> (I am your peace); to those who needed salvation, God revealed himself as Jehovah
> Tsidkenu (I am your righteousness). The examples go on and on. God meets us
> where we are, at our point of need. Preaching to felt needs is a theologically sound
> approach to introducing people to God.[17]

The question is narrowing: Can a seeker enter into the Kingdom of God without

first experiencing repentance? Is not repentance an issue to be dealt with early in the

salvation process, rather than in the sanctification process? Can there be true conversion

without repentance" Is the pronouncement "Welcome to the family of God!" premature?

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[14] Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Church*, 217.
[15] *Ibid.*, 216.
[16] *Ibid.*, 218.
[17] *Ibid.*, 295-6.

Contrast Warren's purpose-driven paradigm with the teachings of Charles Finney,

who called the seekers or responsive people of the crowd "awakened or 'anxious'

sinners."[18] In his Lectures on Revival, Finney is far more confrontational in his gospel

presentation:

> The main purpose of ministering to an awakened sinner is to answer difficulties, to do away with errors and demolish the foundations of self-righteous hopes, sweeping away every vestige of comfort a sinner could find in himself. This is often difficult, and people ministering the Gospel need much study and practice to work effectively. Sinners often cling with a death grasp to false dependencies, and Christ is the last person sinners want to run to for relief. They will make any sacrifice, pay any price, or endure any suffering to avoid coming as lost rebels to throw themselves on Christ alone for salvation. Coming to Christ slashes their self-righteousness and so completely annihilates their pride and self-satisfaction that they recoil from choosing that path.
>
> But this is, after all, the only way a sinner can find relief. Even God cannot comfort and save sinners without humbling them and turning them from their sins.[19]

Finney is resolute. He sees the sinner becoming anxious over his spiritual condition

before God as a work of the Holy Spirit necessary for conversion, and the only resolution

is repentance: "But [God] sees that there is *only one way* to truly comfort a sinner. He

has more compassion than any human being. But the terms of real relief He has fixed as

unyielding as His throne, and He won't change His mind. He knows nothing else will do

the sinner genuine good, because nothing can make him happy until he repents of his sin,

forsakes them, and turns to God. And God therefore won't yield."[20]

Finney sums up his gospel with six headings he calls the right answer. The first

is: "It is generally a safe, suitable direction to tell a sinner to repent."[21] The fourth is

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[18] Finney, *Ibid*., 207.
[19] *Ibid*., 208.
[20] *Ibid*., 209.
[21] *Ibid*., 227.

similar: "Another correct direction to give sinners is 'confess and forsake your sins.'"[22]

Regarding the first, Finney acknowledges that in the days of the apostles people were debating whether Jesus was the true Messiah, and the common exhortation was to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, not merely repent. However, "getting a sinner to yield on this point was the most effective way to humble him." Finney writes that in the gospel we need to explain what repentance is:

> Many think that *remorse*, a sense of guilt, is repentance. Then hell is full of repentance, because it is full of unutterable, eternal remorse. Others feel *regret* over something and call that repentance. But they regret their sin because of the consequences, not because they hate sin. This isn't repentance. Others believe *conviction of sin* and *strong fears of hell* are repentance. Others think the spankings of *conscience* are repentance: they claim they never do anything wrong without repenting—they always feel sorry for it.
>
> . . . Repentance is a change of mind regarding sin itself. Not only is it a change of views, but a change of feelings. It is what we naturally understand by a "change of mind" about anything else. When we hear that someone has changed his mind about Abolition, for example, everyone understands that he has changed his views, his feelings, and his *conduct*.
>
> Repentance always implies hatred of sin. It is a feeling toward sin exactly as God feels. It always implies forsaking sin. Make sinners understand this![23]

While Warren clearly can be seen as following in the methodological tradition that Finney opened wide,[24] he does not agree with Finney on the theology of conversion.

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[22] *Ibid.*, 230.

[23] *Ibid.*, 227-8.

[24] Finney identified new measures that were successful to reaching the sinner of his culture. He introduced these methods with a defense from the commissioning of the apostles:

> And when the Holy Spirit had come and the apostles preached, we hear nothing about their having one set of tactics to carry on their work, or one apostle following a particular pattern because others did it that way. Their commission was, "Go and peach the Gospel, and disciple all nations." It did not dictate any forms. You can't pretend to glean from this charge any invariable method of bringing people to Christ. Rather, this was their commission: Do it—the best way you can; ask wisdom from God; use the faculties He has given you; seek the direction of the Holy Spirit; go forward and do it. And their goal was to make the Gospel known in the most effective way, to make the truth stand out strikingly to secure the attention and obedience of the greatest number possible. No one can find any form of doing this laid out in the Bible. Preaching the Good News stands prominent, while the form is left out of the question.
>
> Finney, *Ibid.*, 162.

Warren says that conversion occurs when a seeker believes and receives Christ. He is content to find that indicated on an anonymous response card by a single number. Finney would go further, looking for evidences of anxiousness over sin from which they find comfort through repentance and confession. He invites sinners to identify themselves by coming to the anxious bench to have Christ deal with their sins, of which he looks for a deep hatred.

The questions that Charles Finney might ask Rick Warren are: Are your seekers anxious over their spiritual condition? Are they awakened? Is the Holy Spirit convicting them of sin? And if not, are they really converted?

Consider also Jonathan Edwards, the primary figure of the First Great Awakening, who struggled with his parents and within himself as to whether he was thoroughly converted. The depth of his terrors of death and hell seemed superficial for achieving full conversion.[25] Through his powerful experiences and his study of Scripture, Edwards became convinced that the crucial point of one's conversion is an awareness and repentance from sin.

Whether in Edwards or Finney, or any of the revival preachers between them, the message of the gospel always included repentance from sin, for the revived believer and the awakened sinner. Faith without repentance could not possibly bring about conversion.

The experience of John Wesley at Aldersgate illustrates that the issue of conversion to sonship[26] not only includes faith, but also a resolution of the issue of sin

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[25] Marsden, *Ibid.*, 28.

[26] Kenneth J. Collins, *John Wesley: A Theological Journal* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 2003), 79. Wesley later distinguishes between the faith of a servant and the faith of a son, and steps back from the term conversion in describing the Aldersgate experience.

which had been troubling him up to that moment. Wesley gives this account of what

transpired on May 24, 1738:

> In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death.[27]

Wesley saw this not only as an experience of assurance, but also of one of victory over

sin. The next day, he writes, "I have now peace with God, and I sin not today." Four

days later he writes, "And I have freedom from sin, not one unholy desire."[28]

To set the record straight, however, we must note that Rick Warren does address

the matters of sin, confession, and repentance. If one goes beyond the *Purpose-Driven*

Life and further into the teachings of Saddleback Community Church, one finds some

remarkably familiar teachings on sin and repentance. Those in the crowd who respond to

the messages of Sunday morning and in Warren's words, become part of God's family,

are urged to enroll in the 101 Membership Class. In the transcript of the teachings there,

a reiteration of the gospel is given. This gospel has four steps, two more than the

"believe and receive" of *The Purpose-Driven Life*. The first point is "admit":

> 1. Admit. Here's what it means to be a Christian. You may be a church member. You may have known about God all your life. You may have wondered, "Am I really a Christian?" Maybe you've had doubts about it. You can know for sure tonight. I don't want any of you to leave here tonight without knowing for sure that you've settled this issue. First you admit. I admit that God has not been first place in my life and I ask Him to forgive my sins. *"If we confess our sins He's faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from every wrong."*[29]

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[27] Collins, *Ibid.*, 89.

[28] *Ibid.*, 90.

[29] Rick Warren, "Discovering Church Membership" *C.L.A.S.S. 101 Teaching Transcript* [Microsoft Word Document], 46; available from http://www.pastors.com/pcom/class/101.asp; Internet; accessed June 1, 2006.

This point is preceded by a lengthy discourse on sin being the problem of why most

people are not experiencing the life God offers. He quotes the verses of a classic gospel

presentation, including Romans 3:23 and 1 John 1:6.[30]

In the next series, 201, which is for the member at Saddleback, a strong teaching

on confession in the context of maturing in Christ is included:

> 1) Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal every sin. He's so good to do that. When I come to Him with an honest heart, He will reveal places that there is sin in my life. *"Examine me, O God, and know my mind; test me, and discover my thoughts. Find out if there is any evil in me."* Psalm 139 says. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the sin.
> 2) Confess each sin specifically. Sometimes we like to get away with confession of sin by just saying, "Forgive me all my sins." You committed those sins individually, you better ask for forgiveness individually. None of this blanket coverage stuff. Proverbs 28:13 *"You will never succeed in life if you try to hide your sins. Confess them and give them up. Then God will show mercy to you."*[31]

This is solid teaching on sin and forgiveness, that without splitting doctrinal hairs, the

church would largely accept as valid and essential.

When we go even further into the teachings at Saddleback we find a popular

optional course called Celebrate Recovery. It is based on a ten-week series of Sunday

morning messages (weekend for Saddleback) on the Beattitudes, and has been developed

into a recovery program intended to replace the twelve-step program of Alcoholics

Anonymous, which he evaluates as vague on "the nature of God, the saving power of

Jesus Christ, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit."[32] The first three of the four participant

guides are replete with principles, Scripture verses, and instructions that take a person

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[30] *Ibid.*, 42. Rom. 3:23 NIV: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" 1 John 1:6 NIV: "If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth."

[31] Rick Warren, "Discovering Spiritual Maturity" *C.L.A.S.S. 201 Teaching Transcript* [Microsoft Word Document], 36; available from http://www.pastors.com/pcom/class/201.asp; Internet; accessed June 1, 2006.

[32] John Baker, *Stepping Out of Denial into God's Grace* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1998), 7. This is the first Participant's Guide in Celebrate Recovery.

from denial into a realization of powerlessness resulting in confession before God and

other offended parties. The spiritual inventories in chapters 9 – 11 rival most

expectations of awakening in the teachings of Edwards, Whitefield, or Finney.[33]

The purpose-driven paradigm, therefore, does not omit the matters of sin and

repentance. Instead, it delays these teachings for those who have already believed and

received and are ready to pursue baptism and membership in the church. Since assurance

is given to the one who believes and receives, though he has not yet admitted his sins,

Warren must either believe that 1) faith without repentance is adequate for salvation, and

that repentance is an issue for subsequent discipling of the believer, or 2) genuine faith is

the first stage in a salvation process that leads to repentance and qualifies a person to be

baptized. If it is the first, then he is out of step with the teachings and practices of revival

history, as we have already seen, and with his own denomination.   The Baptist Faith and

Message declares faith and repentance inseparable.[34] If it is the second, then Warren is

wrong to give any assurance of salvation, such as a welcome into the family of God, until

the believer has repented of known sin. Either way, there is sufficient reason for concern.

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[33] There is an emphasis missing, however, that if Warren had included, I believe would have Finney and others cheering on the purpose-driven paradigm without reservation. That is the teaching that all sin is primarily an offense against God (Psa 51:4).

[34] "The Baptist Faith and Mission" (*Ibid.*) states: "Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Saviour."

APPENDIX 3

CONCERNS REGARDING THE THEOLOGY OF CHRISTIAN SCHWARZ

Christian Schwarz was born in Germany in 1960, and studied theology in Bochum, Bethel, Wuppertal and Mainz, Germany. He also studied at the Fuller School of Church Growth in Pasadena, California. It is difficult to ascertain how long he studied at each, or what degrees he has received. He certainly leaves the impression of being well educated and quite capable of handling theology, philosophy, and other intellectual pursuits. He appears to be quite familiar with Lutheranism and its history, as well as the world of evangelicalism.

More than once he quotes and agrees with Karl Barth on certain positions.[1] He heavily draws on the systematic theologies of Emil Bruner and other continental theologians[2] With favor he quotes Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Paul Tillich. These four firmly reside in the theological camp called neo-orthodoxy:

> Those in sympathy with the movement saw in the word "orthodoxy" the effort to get back to the basic ideas of the Protestant Reformation and even the early church, as a means of proclaiming the truth of the gospel in the twentieth century; and in the prefix "neo" they saw the validity of new philological principles in helping to attain an accurate view of Scripture, which in turn and in combination with orthodoxy would provide a powerful witness to God's action in Christ for those of the new century.[3]

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[1] Schwarz, *Paradigm*, 115, 156, 190.
[2] *Ibid.*, 14.
[3] R. V. Schnucker, "Neo-orthodoxy," In *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984), 755.

A major methodology of Neo-orthodoxy was the dialectic, "the technique of posing opposites against each other in the search of truth."[4] Foundational to Schwarz's work is the bipolar paradigm, where the church has two poles, a clear dialectic. The dynamic pole is the organic model, where the church is described in the New Testament as a body. The static pole is the technical, where the church is seen as a building. "The two poles are in a reciprocal relationship. . . . It can be demonstrated that churches where this is evident are typically healthy and growing. . . . The Holy Spirit causes the growth."[5]

The influence of Neo-orthodoxy on Schwarz's theology seems profound, and could well explain his apathy for revival. Neo-orthodoxy was primarily a conservative response within continental liberalism of Europe. Its roots are not in American or British evangelicalism. This explains the noted absence of references in his works to any figures in the Great Awakenings, like Edwards, Whitefield, Wesley, or Finney.

In *Paradigm Shift*, Schwarz warns of taking doctrine beyond dogmatics to dogmatism, where doctrine is seen as an end in itself.   His bipolar approach starts at the point that "we cannot guarantee truth, neither by an appeal to papal authority, nor by a synod or any other authority."[6] One of the consequences of this approach is that "every doctrine must be judged by the criterion of whether, in its own context, it has the effect of stimulating the life and growth of the church as an organism."[7] This "functional dogmatics" is not to be confused with relativism. Theology should be the tool we develop to serve God's purposes as revealed to us in the Bible. The dogma of verbal inspiration, however, according to Schwarz, is literalism that can easily replace the Word

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[4] *Ibid.*
[5] Schwarz, *Natural Church Development*, 85.
[6] Schwarz, *Paradigm*, 108.
[7] *Ibid.*, 109.

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who is Christ with the Word that is the Bible. Faith in Christ should not be equated with faith in the infallibility of the Bible.[8] Rather, the bipolar approach follows a historical and functional hermeneutic, seeking the "canon within the canon" by Luther's category of "that which advances Christ."[9] But even Luther could not consistently follow this criterion, sometimes falling back to "the formally authoritarian or axiomatic view of Scripture" (i.e. verbal inspiration).[10] Schwarz quotes Weber to sum up his position, "No canon can give the church security (*securitas*). The church can only be certain of the word that is confirmed in its life by the Spirit (*certitudo*)."[11]

Fundamentalism is a danger to the church growth movement, according to Schwarz, because it seeks security in an institutionalistic static pole. Faced with Bible criticism, the fundamentalists embraced verbal inspiration, which inevitably seeks to control the organic nature of the church, squelching natural church development. Schwarz is so strong on his objections to fundamentalism that he declares it "inconsistent with the biblical revelation and foreign to the church growth movement."[12] Even though Donald McGavran, the father of the church growth movement, identified himself as a fundamentalist, Schwarz maintains his insistence and discounts the growth of such churches as following a highly questionable pragmatism.

From another direction, church health is also threatened by spiritualism. Schwarz defines spiritualism as the danger to the left of the dynamic pole of bipolar theology, which focuses on the supernatural over the natural and spurns the technocratic and

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[8] *Ibid*., 117.
[9] *Ibid.*, 122.
[10] *Ibid*, 113. An evangelical response to Schwarz is needed at this point, as he does not seem to be fair with his treatment of verbal inspiration, infallibility, or even Luther's position on inspiration.
[11] *Ibid*., 123.
[12] *Ibid.*

organizational aspects of the church. A spiritualist is more interested in the spirit over the

letter, and the supernatural over the natural. They would insist that the church should

focus on prayer and personal spirituality over all other quality characteristics, for God

brings about the development of His church with blessings from above, not through

automatisms within. Schwarz sets up an extreme type of the spiritualist, which he readily

admits no one could possibly fulfill, in order to point out five characteristics:

subjectivism, autonomism, dualism, irrationality, and mysticism.[13] Together, they

comprise a disastrous theological paradigm, one whose influence most spiritualists are

unaware. All spiritualistic tendencies need to be overcome, whether by the likes of

Martin Luther or C. Peter Wagner.[14]

   The spiritualist is the "enthusiast" of old, perhaps more in the sense of the Great

Awakening than the earlier European Anabaptists.[15] They are the ones who hinder any

strategic work on church development with a "nebulous expectancy of 'revival.'"

Schwarz challenges their imbalance:

> What then? Then church development will more than ever be the need of the hour.
> Then we would be wise to prepare ourselves now by planned, specific action.
> Then, more than ever, we will need to be better informed, to question our
> comfortable thought patterns, mercilessly to analyze the (often pitiful) state of our
> churches, to uncover the hindrances to church development that we carry within
> ourselves, and to set about the difficult task of overcoming them.[16]

Among the several comments Schwarz makes on revival as an alternative to natural

church development, are these pertinent arguments:

> But in many cases, "passionate spirituality" is not the minimum factor of the
> church, and growth is blocked by other factors (such as dysfunctional structures, a

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[13] It would only be more confusing to try to explain his logic here, which is given in the section beginning in *Paradigm*, 32.

[14] *Ibid*., 39. Wagner left his position at Fuller to study and pursue the factor of prayer in the growth of God's Church.

[15] *Ibid*., 33.

[16] *Ibid*., 38.

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ministry that is not gift-oriented, a questionable evangelistic concept). Concentrating the church's resources on spirituality in these cases can even be counterproductive. The Christians are exhorted to pray more, spend more time with the Bible, deepen their commitment to Jesus, believe his promises more (because it is thought that these things will automatically lead to revival). But since the church is disobedient to God in other areas, and the hindrances to revival are to be found *there*, the Christians do not, of course, experience an answer to their prayers for revival.[17]

Our research of churches that experience a revival clearly indicates—besides much that cannot be transferred—high values for all of the eight characteristics. I know of no "revival" church that can do without any of these eight principles.[18]

It often seems that one motive of the advocates of the revival approach is the idea that, when the revival comes, church growth will occur without any work—or at least with far less work . . . The Bible nowhere hints at this idea. Or do the things Jesus, Paul, and the others teach us about our share in church development no longer apply when revival comes? Do all analogies with agriculture (with the implications of hard work) cease to be valid when there is revival? Can we expect to have less work at harvest time of all times?

Obviously, Schwarz objects to any expectancy of revival if it means that the church is less involved in the constant task of church health according to the God-given principles discovered by Natural Church Development.

Schwarz believes that his greatest contribution will be the Trinitarian Compass, which he describes as the "theological heart of NCD."[19] Briefly, he identifies three colors to describe the Trinity, life, conversion, authorities, tendencies, and most systems of human and church life.[20] The three works of God are creation (green, focus on the Father), Calvary (red, focus on the Son), and Pentecost (blue, focus on the Spirit). The three dimensions of life are body (green), soul (red), and spirit (blue). There are three tendencies: the liberals emphasize the Father, the evangelicals emphasize the Son, and the charismatics emphasize the Spirit. The Trinitarian Compass is used by Schwarz to

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[17] *Ibid*., 260.

[18] *Ibid*., 261.

[19] Christian A. Schwarz, *Color Your World with Natural Church Development* (St. Charles, Ill.: ChurchSmart Resources, 2005), 24.

[20] *Ibid*., 12.

expound on each of the eight quality characteristics, and has become the revised approach for introducing and explaining Natural Church Development. He has given another perspective to theological issues and to the practical applications of church health within the church.

From above, and those who are sensitive to the theological issues that have divided the church in the past will likely not be happy with Schwarz's broad generalizations that seem to blur deep historical schisms. To speak of three authorities, science, Scripture, and experience, as if they were equals, ignores the hard fought battles of the Reformation. Charismatics and evangelicals are concerned whether liberals are true Christians at all, and do not own them as their green counterpart in the church. Schwarz is overly-optimistic in his belief that NCD is an ecumenical movement,[21] and dangerously naïve if he thinks that there can be steps toward unity without the resolution of major doctrinal disagreements.

From the above, and those matters raised in chapter five, I offer some thoughts.

First, if you are a conservative Calvinist, and do not accept that the innovations of Charles Finney were good for the church, you will have difficulty with NCD. Consider these reasons:

1. Schwarz appears neo-orthodox, firmly rooted in dialectic methodology. He rejects the position of verbal inspiration—or his caricature of verbal inspiration as dictation—for a more elusive concept of the Bible containing the Word. All doctrine and teachings are up for review under the changing criteria of functional dogmatics.

2. Similarly, Schwarz has an outward disdain for all creeds and confessions, or anything else that would come across as traditionalism. Puritanism is a category to be shunned. He shows little sympathy with the reformers beyond Luther.

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[21] *Ibid*., 24.

3. Like the church growth movement and much of later revivalism, NCD is a product of "Finneyism," which was a change not "so much from Calvinism to Arminianism as from theology to experience, from truth to technique, from elites to populism, and from an emphasis on 'serving God' to an emphasis on 'servicing the self' in serving God."[22] NCD is based on scientific research, not Bible exegesis. It is sociology informing methodology leading to theological assertions, some of which are questionable.

For these reasons, and some of the other thoughts listed below, NCD seems contrary to the positions of a conservative Calvinist.

For the larger camp of evangelicals, who rejoice that "Finney lives on!"[23] I urge caution. A blanket endorsement of Natural Church Development by an evangelical pastor to his congregation is to open a door to dangers. My concerns are many:

1. Schwarz does not honor revivals or awakenings with the historical prominence they are due. He does not agree with the positions of Edwards, Finney, or Spurgeon on the necessity of revival to win the world to Christ. He has little place in his methodology for the revival tradition that is so important in defining evangelicalism today.

2. Likewise, Schwarz uses terms that are secular and foreign to the average pastor or lay leader, and labels that are turned negative (e.g. spiritualist, traditionalist, puritanism). In doing so, he disconnects us from our rich and blessed heritage. A cumbersome learning curve is encountered as we are re-educated into NCD terminology.[24]

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[22] Guiness, Os, *Dining With the Devil* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1997), 27.
[23] Quote of former Wheaton College president, Carl Armerding, by Michael S. Horton, "The Legacy of Charles Finney," *Premise* II (27 March 1995), 6.
[24] Again, it appears that this is being addressed with revisions.

3. A red flag must be waved when Schwarz speaks of fundamentalism and verbal inspiration so disparagingly. Fundamentalism and evangelicalism in America are two sons who grew up sharing the same bedroom, and verbal inspiration is the carpeting between their beds. He does not understand this doctrine in its properly stated form. It has been foundational in all of revival history, and evangelical pastors do not need their people unnecessarily exposed to seeds of doubt and derision.

4. Passionate spirituality is demoted by NCD to be one of eight essential qualities. Yet the pastor who relies on the Bible to preach and teach truth will find that passionate spirituality, along with loving relationships, rise far above the others on God's list of priorities. The others are better seen as biblical methodologies, not the same as essential qualities and not equal in importance to passion and love. Some distinction needs to be made so that our congregations do not equate them.

5. Warnings also should be made on the matter of need-oriented evangelism. There is a danger of focusing on the felt needs of the lost while glossing over the real need, forgiveness from sin and salvation from damnation. In an effort to be more sensitive in our gospel, we might change it beyond recognition, omitting the response of the revivalists and the New Testament: repent! Pastors should take to heart the warning of Jeremiah to the leaders of his day: "They have healed the brokenness of my people superficially, saying, 'Peace, peace,' but there is no peace."[25]

6. Distinction needs to be made between revealed truth in the Bible and all other truth. If we agree with Augustine that "all truth is God's truth," we can accept biotic

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[25] Jer. 6:14, *New American Standard Bible* (Anaheim, CA: Foundation Publications, Inc, 1997).

thinking and own the results of scientific research.[26] However, they should not be put on the high shelf reserved for biblical truth. Schwarz overstates the importance of his work by calling it a paradigm shift that can transform theological thinking. His work is not the beginning of a third reformation, this one not of theology or piety, but "to create structures which will be suitable vessels so that what the first two reformations demanded can be put into practice."[27] The bipolar paradigm is helpful, but is largely extra-biblical. We should examine what we are moving from and to before we make this paradigm shift.

7. We have to struggle with the question: Does the natural in NCD, though of God, diminish the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit? Is there a dimension in church renewal where God wants us to step back and believe Him, to see Him do a new work for us? By baptizing all truth into Christian truth, and raising it to the level of revelation, we might easily depend on human wisdom and effort, and find in the end that we have built with wood, hay, and stubble. The word of the Lord to Zerubbabel is still true, "'Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord of Hosts."[28]

Even so, I believe that Natural Church Development as a tool brings a large contribution to the field of church health. Its essential qualities, for the most part, can be defended biblically. Its biotic principles are quite helpful. The assessment instrument it offers is likely the best available.

In fact, to be completely fair, I need to quote Schwarz a bit further on revival:

> To avoid misunderstandings, let me add that in many growing churches I
> have ministered in, an expectation of revival is linked with consistent work for
> church development. In churches that approach revival in *this* way we can study
> and learn all the quality characteristics we have identified (at least I have studied

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[26] Schwarz goes further than our Lord intended in his interpretation of Matthew 6:26 to authorize scientific research to discern Christian principles.

[27] Schwarz, *Paradigm*, 92.

[28] Zech. 4:6, NASB.

them there). The same applies to churches who do not only expect, but actually *experience* revival. Their leaders may not reflect on their work in the same ways as this book does, they may not be conscious of some of the principles we use—but in these churches the work is going forward in the sense of what we call natural church development. The expectation of revival is the "tonic" that motivates Christians to do all they can in all eight areas. And they do it with all their hearts![29]

Schwarz then adds, "If revival is understood in this way, I am a passionate advocate of this approach."

Perhaps there is a meeting of the minds. Perhaps NCD does not have to be in opposition to revival for church renewal. Perhaps there can be a careful synthesis that will enable the church today to experience even more of church health and revival than earlier times. Perhaps we can have renewal, and sustain it with the methodology of NCD. This can happen when pastors and church leaders are discerning and wise in their application of both NCD and revival principles.

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[29] Schwarz, *Paradigm*, 262-263.

APPENDIX 4

STRATEGY FOR CHURCH HEALTH IN THE SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT, C&MA

One of the practical expressions of this study has been the development of a strategy for the Southeastern District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, where this author has been given the task of church health as an assistant district superintendent. The C&MA has owned Spader's *Growing a Healthy Church* as the framework for disciple-making for several years. Our district had made an early commitment to train pastors to serve as coaches in Natural Church Development. The task before us was to develop a fuller strategy that would address the health conditions of all of our churches.

What follows are the slides of a presentation to introduce the strategy we are in the process of implementing. In the right column are comments intended to help the reader understand how the results of this study are being applied.

It is readily observable that NCD is a major component in the strategy. The primary reason for this is the practicality of its approach, both with the survey and the focus on the minimum factor. Trained coaches are proving a tremendous asset. This author's reservations about the theology of Christian Schwarz, as well as his scientific approach (I admit that I am a spiritualist), are addressed by the freedom to use supplemental resources outside of NCD and forthcoming changes in the NCD materials being produced by ChurchSmart in the United States.

Slide 1

CHURCH HEALTH

Addressing the Health Needs
of All of Our Churches
in the Southeastern District, C&MA

Slide 2

The Health Paradigm

- A helpful metaphor: Wellness Care, Special Care, and Critical Care churches
- A biblical metaphor: the Church is a body!
- "When congregations are healthy, they grow the way God intends" – Rick Warren
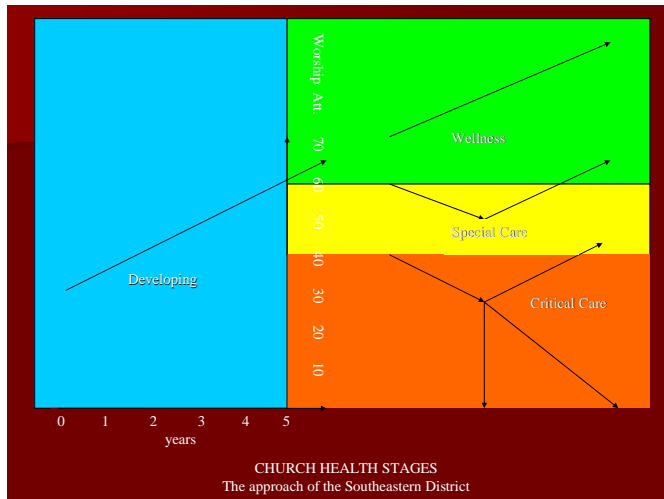
- The accredited churches are divided into three categories, with contemporary medical health terms

Slide 3

I planted the seed,
Apollos watered it,
but God made it grow.
So neither he who plants
nor he who waters is anything,
but only God,
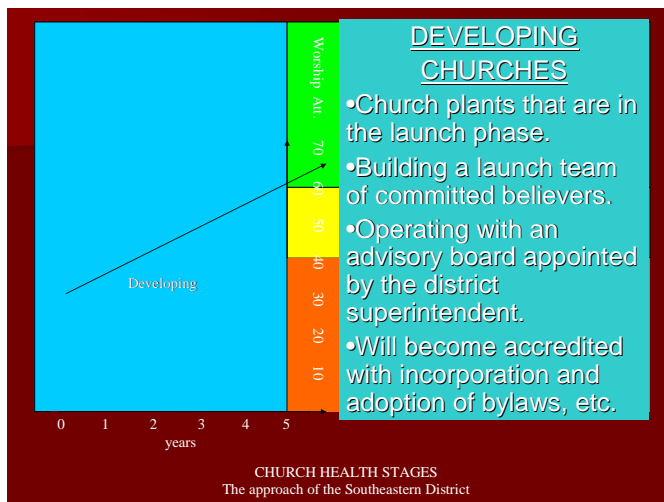*who makes things grow.*

1 Corinthians 3:6-7

- It is important to stress full dependence upon God at this point. We are not proposing anything beyond God's way of growing a church.
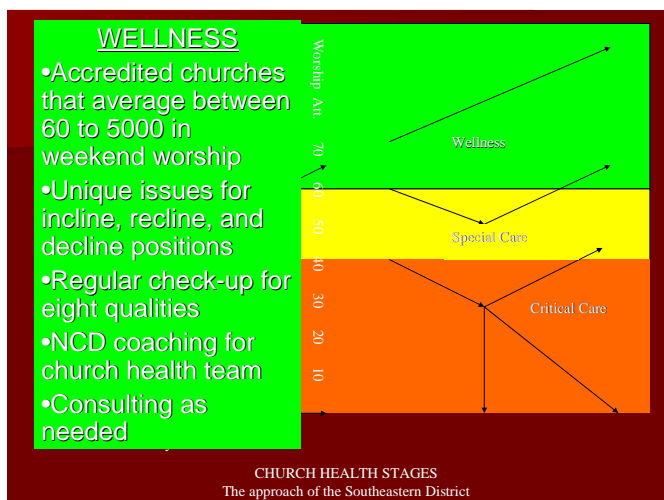
Slide 4

- The developing churches are recent church plants not yet put on accredited status.
- The right column is the accredited churches.

Slide 5

- The principles of church health and revival are important to the early development of a new church.
- However, the focus of church health in this district is on accredited churches.

Slide 6

- Disclaimer: Average weekend worship attendance is arbitrary, and an "inadequate" measurement (Warren).
- Disclaimer: Wellness churches could be on recline or decline.
- NCD serves as an annual physical exam to prevent problems or detect them early.
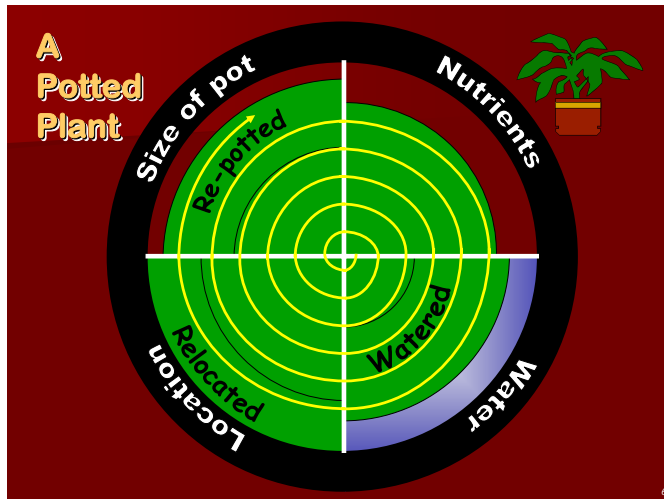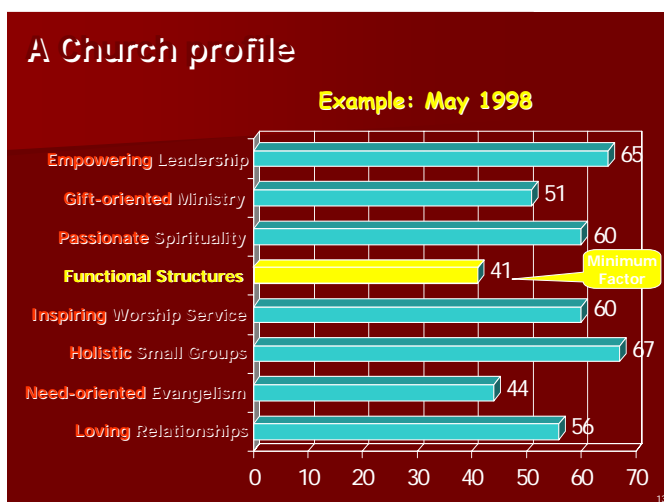
Slide 7

- An excellent NCD illustration of how addressing the need allows growth.
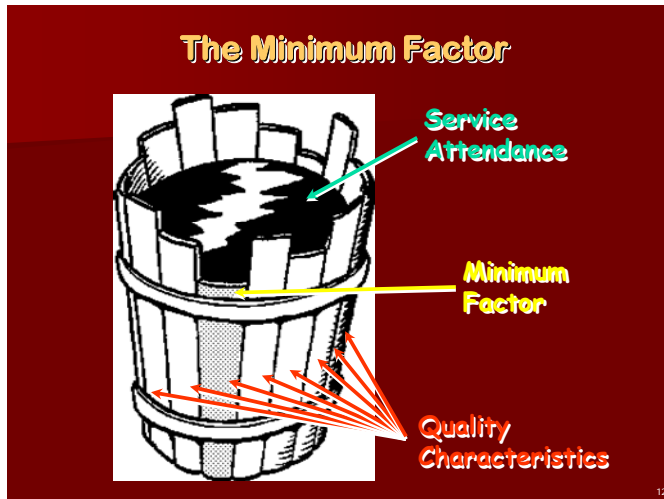- The issue for the plant is not illness, but deficiencies that inhibit growth.

Slide 8

- The eight essential qualities, with the focus on the adjective, address well the issues for a healthy church.

Slide 9

- An example of the NCD profile for a church.
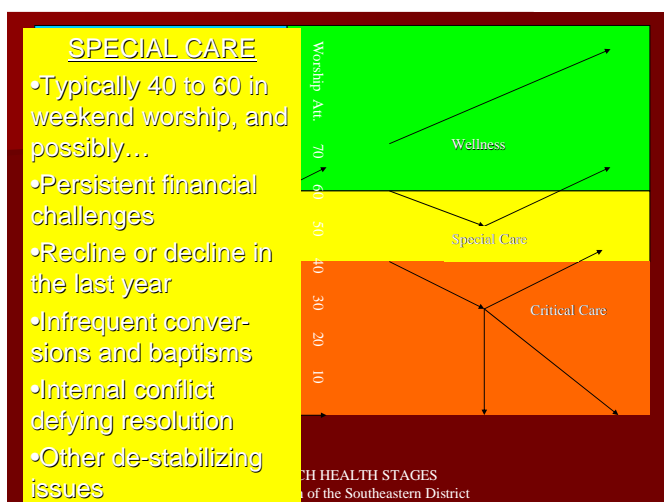- Note the emphasis on the minimum factor.

Slide 10

- Understanding of the minimum factor helps the leadership of a wellness church appreciate that the NCD is not an overwhelming prospect.

Slide 11

- It is at this point that the church leaders need to understand the other factors in church health and revival.
- These three are not adequately addressed in NCD.

Slide 12

- Special care is intended to intercept churches that are declining and help them to turn-around.
- NCD is only part of the plan. More is needed. The NCD assessment, however, is helpful in discerning the need and measuring progress.
- Other turn-around resources need to be utilized.

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Special Care Program

- A two-year contractual program between the pastor, the church board and the district.
- The pastor will meet quarterly, or more often if requested, with the consultant, individually or in cohort groups.
- The pastor and church leadership will cooperate fully with the diagnostic (NCD, others) and prescriptive agenda of the consultant, including training and reporting requirements.
- The pastor, board, and church will mobilize for prayer and the prescribed action plan.
- At the end of two years, an NCD assessment will be taken and recommendations for further actions will be given.

Slide 13

- The contractual agreement stresses commitment to the priority of special care.
- A strong emphasis on prayer for turn-around.
- Regular encouragement, including workshops on each of the 8 qualities.
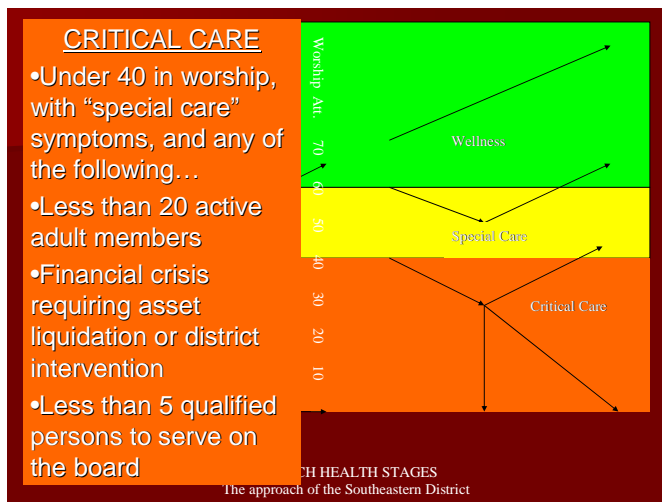
Slide 14

- Critical care is like entering the hospital, where life is not as usual.
- Triage evaluations are intended to help the church and district discern if there is any hope of life, and if so, is there potential for recovery. The choices are to pull the plug for it is totally dependent on life support, or hospice care by appointing a chaplain pastor to guide it to its end, or revitalization.

CRITICAL CARE
- Under 40 in worship, with "special care" symptoms, and any of the following…
- Less than 20 active adult members
- Financial crisis requiring asset liquidation or district intervention
- Less than 5 qualified persons to serve on the board

Worship Att.

Wellness

Special Care

Critical Care

CH HEALTH STAGES
The approach of the Southeastern District

Critical Care Program

- The church shall be put on "development" status by action of the DEXCOM, and the district superintendent shall lead the church with an advisory board.
- Official membership is suspended, as are the constitution and bylaws of the church.
- The district superintendent becomes the sole corporate member, and the DEXCOM is the sole director of the corporation.
- "Guidelines for the Governance of a Developing Church" are followed.
- The present pastor leads the church into a 6 month evaluation period.
- Options include major turn-around intervention, maintenance ministry to eventual closing, immediate closing, and re-plant.

Slide 15

- Revitalization requires firm action from the district, perhaps including pastoral change.
- Prayer strategy within and beyond the church.
- Monthly meetings with accountability.
- Reading, training, and coaching for leaders.

The Goals for CC Churches

- To become a healthy core of Christ followers who are clearly in love with God, actively loving one another and those around them who don't yet know Him.
- To develop an inner core of leaders strong enough to lead the church into the future
- To grow into a Christ-centered dynamic body strong enough to...

Slide 16

- Emphasis on the basics.
- Spader's *Growing a Healthy Church* foundation level very helpful.

Re-launch as a Healthy Church!
Within 12, 18, or 24 Months

Slide 17

- Revitalization is more difficult than planting a new church.
- Six month intervals allow for evaluation and necessary changes.
- Success is not guaranteed as intervention may have been too late.

Objectives of Church Health in the Southeastern District

- All wellness care churches, through regular check ups, are increasing in health and fruitfulness.
- All special care churches, through early intervention, are experiencing turn-around unto wellness.
- Critical care churches are few due to successful revitalization and early special care intervention.

Slide 18

- The challenge is for pastors to understand how vital church health is to their church, whether wellness, special, or critical care.

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VITA

After thirty years as a pastor, Harris Campbell has recently become the Assistant District Superintendent of the Southeastern District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. His major assignment is church health, with the challenge of assisting all of the district churches, of various sizes and ethnicities, to experience maximum ministry.

Born on February 8, 1952 as Harris W. Campbell, III, he grew up in White Plains, New York. His undergraduate work was done at Nyack College, where he received a Bachelor of Science in Theology. He and his wife, Katrina, planted a church in rural Ohio. Given the opportunity to go to seminary, they moved to Deerfield, Illinois, where he studied at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, receiving the degrees of Master of Divinity and Master of Arts in Old Testament. From there, the Campbell's went to Columbus, Ohio, where they pastored a church and raised their three sons. Upon Katrina's graduation from The Ohio State University as a nursing major, they went to their third church, in West Palm Beach, Florida. They have enjoyed seeing their sons marry and bless them with five grandchildren.

Christian Schwarz would likely call Harris a spiritualist, but his journey has taken him from church growth devotee to prayer and revival reactionary, and back to what he finds to be a biblical balance.

He is to receive the Doctor of Ministry from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in May of 2007.